

YOUNG MEN
OF SCRIPTURE

W. T. P. WOLSTON

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YOUNG MEN OF SCRIPTURE.

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Young Men of Scripture.

NINE ADDRESSES TO YOUNG MEN.

BY

W. T. P. WOLSTON, M.D.,

AUTHOR OF "ANOTHER COMFORTER"; "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM"; "SIMON
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"RECORDS OF GRACE"; "THE CALL OF THE BRIDE"; &c. &c.

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PREFACE.


THE contents of this little volume consist of a series of addresses to students, and young men generally, delivered in the Operetta House, Edinburgh, during November and December last. Taken down in shorthand, they were revised and published weekly as delivered, and are now, at the desire of many, issued in a permanent form.

They in no wise pretend to be a biographical account of the characters which form their basis. These are only pegs on which to hang some homely truths for young men; and if they be the means of turning any such to know, follow, and serve the Saviour, the author's end will be gained, and God's heart gladdened.

May He who once said to a young man, "Come, take up the cross, and follow me," graciously deign to use these pages to win many a youthful heart for Himself.

W. T. P. W.

46 CHARLOTTE SQUARE,
EDINBURGH, 1st March 1894.



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Young Men of Scripture.



THE FIRST YOUNG MAN—CONQUERED.

GENESIS i.-iii.

Lecture I.

IT is just three thousand years ago since a very important question was put by a king—"Where withal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and God's Spirit undoubtedly led to the answer—"By taking heed thereto, according to thy word" (Ps. cxix. 9). Now, my friends, that witness is true, and if you want your way cleansed, and if you want to be a happy man—a real man of God, a being worthy of the name of man in this world—the secret of this is by taking heed to God's Word. I hold it in my hand. I know men scoff at it. I know we live in an infidel, an unbelieving age, but I desire to commence this series of meetings with young men, with the confession, made in all possible simplicity, that I believe this to be God's Word—a revelation from God to us of what He is, and of all that you and I need for our guidance in time, and likewise a blessed guide into eternity. From the bottom of my heart, I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. I accept it as such from cover to cover. I make these remarks because I know the tendency of

the age is to doubt, and it is very striking that when a young man gets to be a doubter he thinks himself rather a fine fellow. That is a strange thing to say, yet none the less true, but you may depend upon it that a young man, who is a simple and reverent believer in revelation, is infinitely happier and holier than a man who is in doubt of God's Word.

To-night, then, we will look at what God tells us of the creation of the first man. Him I am bold to call "The First Young Man," because the man spoken of in these scriptures I have read to you to-night comes on the scene fresh and new—a brand new man. I believe God's record, not man's theory of the way man came into the world. I know perfectly well we are told nowadays—for men are coming to wondrous conclusions—that man is only developed protoplasm, or—could only a "missing link" be discovered—the direct descendant of an ape; in plain language, a pretty well-grown monkey, with his tail worn off by sitting on it. We are told to believe that insensate folly as to our origin. I believe it to be a downright lie of the devil, from top to bottom of the whole theory. I believe God gives us here the account of the origin of man, and what is more, it gives us all that is necessary for us to know about the origin of man. Perfectly well am I acquainted with the fact that men are busily engaged to-day in trying to dig up relics of what they are pleased to call "prehistoric man," but when I read in Scripture of "the first man Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45), I believe that God speaks about the first man that ever existed, and that He has spoken the truth regarding his origin is certain.

You and I may be certain that we have got before

our eyes to-night the history of the first man the world ever saw. I quite admit that man's ruin. I quite admit that world is ruined too. But if man be ruined, and the scene through which he passes is ruined likewise through his sin, the resources of God are not ruined, and what He can do for ruined man opens out before us in the moment of that ruin. You will find in Scripture that there are but two men. There is the first man, and the last. The first man is Adam, and the second—the last Adam—the Lord Jesus.

Let us look at that which Scripture tells us of the history of the first man, the place in which he appears, and glance for a moment at his surroundings. I like to see a young man in his surroundings, and if I can do so, I can form a fairly good opinion of what he is. "Noscitur a sociis," said an ancient. "A man is known by his companions." He is known by his company. We look to-night at the surroundings of this first young man—at that with which God surrounded him; and the opening chapters of Genesis present these very naturally and simply. Now we are told very frequently that the Scriptures and geology cannot be reconciled, and that science is now-a-days so far advanced that we are to believe the geologists and not the Scriptures. With your leave I mean to believe Scripture, and if the geologist does not agree with Scripture, then I am not going to follow him. I have nothing to say against his facts, but with his conclusions I am at issue. He demands illimitable spaces of time for the deposition of the various strata of the crust of the earth. I admit them. But look at your Bible, does it say that God did all His creatorial

work in six days? It says nothing of the sort. The opening lines of God's revelation are—" *In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). You will say, When was the beginning? Well, you were not there, and I was not there, so we cannot fix it; but go back as far as you like, and you will find only the Creator was there. Man was not there, and man knows nothing about it. What took place God reveals. Between the first and second verses of Genesis i. there is, without doubt, a period as illimitable as the most unbelieving and insatiable geologist would like. If he says he must have millions, or even billions of trillions of years, he is welcome to them. You will find space for them between the first and second verses of Genesis i. The first statement of God is that He created the heavens and the earth, and the next statement says nothing about the heavens. It speaks of the earth alone, just because man was to be put upon it. The second verse deals only with the earth, "And *the earth* was without form and void,"—if you will, a shapeless mass. You turn and say, So God made earth a shapeless mass? No; He did not. You reply, The first of Genesis says so. No, it does not. It says, "And the earth *was* without form, and void." If you have read your Bible carefully—and if you have never done that, I pray you from this night to begin—you will have come across a verse in the 45th chapter of the book of Isaiah, which tells you that God did not make the earth a shapeless mass. I will read it to you. "Thus saith the Lord,"—this is the true prophet-call to attention; and albeit learned nineteenth-century critics tell us that Isaiah was a rhapsodical and old-fashioned

writer, not to be believed, I do believe him for all that,—I believe what he wrote. “Thus saith the Lord”—and the Lord never tells any lies, which cannot be said of man—“that *created* the heavens, God himself that *formed* the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it (in the beginning) *not in vain* (the same word as is translated, “without form and void” in Gen. i. 2); he *formed* it (during the six days) to be *inhabited*: I am the Lord, and there is none else” (Isa. xlv. 18).

How beautiful Scripture is! If you have had difficulties and doubts about Genesis i., the Spirit of God, through the prophet, says God did not create the earth “without form, and void.” You may turn to me and say, How did it become so? I cannot tell you, but that was not the way God created the earth. The second verse describes the condition in which it was found, when He put His hand to it to put it into shape, so that He might put man upon it. That part of His work took Him six days, but creation as such was “in the beginning.” Concerning it we are absolutely clear, for “through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. xi. 3). How the earth became without form, or why, Scripture does not tell us; and where Scripture does not speak, I think you and I ought not to venture an opinion.

Now our friend the geologist has demanded uncountable millions of years for the deposition of the earth’s crust, and pointed out the order in which these varied strata were deposited. All he wants Scripture concedes him space for, in the interval we have

observed. But he goes on and says that the surface of the earth has certainly undergone—if I remember rightly—about nine-and-twenty marked and manifest upheavals. In fact, the whole crust of the earth has been repeatedly burst up, and there may have been those nine-and-twenty upheavals. What have all these irruptions produced? Granite was formed at the bottom; it is up at the top now, and you are building houses with it. The coal which you are now getting was clearly formed very much farther down than where it is now found, and had it not been for these upheavals, which rendered the earth “without form, and void,” it would never have been within reach of the miner’s pickaxe and shovel now. In the infinite wisdom of God, He arranged and produced these things for the carrying out of His own purpose; and thus the earth was in a truly suited condition for the Lord to shape, or “form,” as Isaiah says, when the moment arrived for Him to put man upon it.

When that moment comes, Scripture speaks of days,—“and the evening and the morning were the first day.” I believe these days were days of twenty-four hours. How simple and perfect is God’s tale of creation! He first of all created, in the beginning, the heavens and the earth; and secondly, at a date which we can measure, reformed and fashioned the earth, and then put man on it. He did not *create* the world in six days, nor does Scripture say so. Careless readers have done that. A joiner might fashion a table, but he could not create the material. The creation of the wood and the making of the table are totally different things.

If we now glance at the six days, we see that first

of all God brings in Light. That is what you all want. You must get light. Every man needs it, and it is a wonderful moment in a man's history when God says to him, "Let there be light." Has it ever come in your history? Has God said about your darkened soul, "Let there be light"? Well, light came. The second day He discloses heaven. That, I think, is very nice,—He did that before He touched the earth. Earth was not designed to be man's eternal resting-place, but heaven may be yours and mine through the precious blood of Jesus. The seas are next divided from each other; and the vegetable kingdom comes into existence on the third day. The sun, moon, and stars—the powers that were to rule on earth—were next seen, on the fourth day; and on the fifth day you get a part of the animal kingdom—fish and fowl—created by the simple fiat of God. On the sixth day, another side of the animal kingdom—the beasts of the field—come into notice, as we hear God say, in the 24th verse, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing." On the sixth day we get God's statement about man's genesis. And now, if you have any doubts about your origin, will you listen to God for a moment?—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea," &c. It is man as a race that is meant here, as we read, "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." God (Elohim) goes into solemn counsel over man's creation. Elohim is the plural of Eloah, "The Supreme." It is Deity—God in the absolute! God, as God, goes into solemn counsel, and says, "Let us

make man in our image, after our likeness." These terms are quite different. An image gives the idea of representation; likeness gives the idea of moral quality. "Let us make man in our image." He was to represent God on the earth, and rule over the earth. That was the point in the words, "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (ver. 26).

The result of this six days' work was that God declared everything He did was good. Now observe that when He makes man and puts him upon the earth, in the last verse of the first chapter, He says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was *very* good." Like a workman, He contemplates the work of His hands, and the heavens declare His glory. The former works are *good*, but when the finest of all, man, in the image of God, and in the likeness of God, is created, He pronounces His estimate of him as *very good*. The first three verses of chapter ii. belong to chapter i., and they tell us that God rested. For six days He laboured, and then He rested.

In the seventh verse we are told, "And the Lord God (Jehovah-Elohim) formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." There is an immense scope of truth in these words, but time fails me to go much into detail. You see, however at once, that man's body was formed from the dust of the earth. The apostle Paul, in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians—though in your Bibles it is not translated

exactly as it might be—speaks of man “as earthy.” That is scarcely it. “The first man out of the earth was made of dust” is the correct rendering. This was the truth revealed in Genesis ii.; and hence the language used by the Spirit of God in 1st Corinthians xv. 47, “The first man is out of the earth, made of dust.” Observe that is exactly what God does here. He took up the dust and formed man’s body; and what came next? He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Here you have the truth as to the origin of man. It is wonderful, just because it is divine. He is the handiwork of God, and his life comes from God. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. I think that is far better than merely being the developed descendant of an ape. If you give up the record of God in the second chapter of Genesis as to the origin of man, you will have to give up Christ also. Mark what the Holy Ghost says concerning Him—as a man. In Luke’s Gospel (chap. iii.) His genealogy is traced back to Seth, “who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.” Man sprang from God, and got his life from God. He is the direct offspring of God, as the apostle Paul says, in addressing the Athenians, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts xvii. 28).

Man’s start in the world then was divinely perfect, not developmental. Into his nostrils had God Himself breathed “the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Immortality is dependent on that, and the reason why you are an immortal soul is because

man is the direct offspring of God. You have in your bosom—every one of you—immortality, and you must exist as long as God exists. Immortality and eternal life do not carry the same thought. The former every man possesses, the latter only they who are Christ's, for He is it, and to have the Son of God is to have life (1 John v. 12). In Scripture immortality means eternal existence or being, and man—the daring scepticism of these days notwithstanding—yes, every young man here to-night possesses eternal existence. Where he will spend that existence is another thing. We read of eternal life, and of eternal judgment. These are the two—the only two—bournes of man. You will have an eternal existence. Where will you spend it? That is a matter for yourself. I know where I shall spend my eternity—with the Saviour, who in grace and love died for me. You have immortality, and you cannot crush it out. Annihilation is a lie of the devil, and crass folly to boot. You cannot destroy anything on earth. You may alter the shape of matter, but you cannot annihilate it. You might burn that table, but its constituent elements remain—weight for weight—in the form of carbon, water, salts, and gases. So is it with man. His form may be changed, but *he* remains. No! you have an immortal soul. It has sprung from God, and the salvation of that soul is a very serious and important question for you and for me.

We will now go a little further with the Scripture, and see what became of the man who thus so divinely and gloriously starts on his way. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, we are told. Eden means “delight.” It is called Paradise in the

Greek translation—the Septuagint. We have heard of “Paradise Lost” and “Paradise Regained,” but Scripture does not speak of the latter; once lost man’s Paradise is never regained, but God in grace, opens a heavenly Paradise. In Eden were two trees, “the tree of life,”—sovereign grace in Christ,—and “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”—responsibility in man, a test of his obedience.

In this garden God placed man to enjoy His bounty, His goodness, and, above all, Himself. He was lord of all he surveyed. He was in relationship with God, and was monarch of all creation. All that he saw was good, but there was one reservation by his Creator, who therein exercised His authority. “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii. 16, 17). You have here man put into responsibility, and his responsibility was merely obedience in respect of that tree, and that tree only. I do not know what tree it was. Scripture does not say. It was the one test of obedience and responsibility before God. See then how God works to make everything blessed and happy for man. He was in happy relationship with God on the one hand, enjoying Him; and in relationship with creation on the other, ruling over it. Observe this,—and I think it is very interesting,—while he was *inferior* to God and could not reach up to Him, he was *superior* to the animals, and they could not reach up to him. Hence he was alone, his affections, his heart as a man, were not satisfied; and therefore God introduces another

relationship, that of *equality*. The woman is brought in, and that really makes the man complete. God brings the woman to this man, and the way in which the Lord introduces her is very striking. Adam falls into a deep sleep, and as he sleeps God takes a rib, and of that rib he frames the woman. A beautiful and striking type that is of the Lord Jesus going into death, that out of His death there might come life to those who had it not. I have no doubt you have a beautiful figure of Christ and the Church in this incident of the taking of the rib.

Now, in chapter iii., whom do we find intruding into this scene of absolute delight? Everything is lovely and pleasant, and over all is man set with his wife. It goes without saying, that if Satan could spoil this he would do so, and the third chapter introduces the enemy coming in the form of a tempter. He does not come up and say, I am your enemy; I am the foe of God and the deceiver of man—though both are true. The devil never presents himself openly to you or me. He comes to the woman, and speaks about God's word. He recognised that he was powerless unless he could deceive. "Yea," he said, "hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die." The point was, she went beyond Scripture, for so far as we read God had said nothing about "not touching" the tree; and when we go beyond Scripture we are sure to get into danger. Satan boldly says, "Ye shall not surely die." And what is the next thing? Beguiled by

smooth words, Eve took the fruit. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." The forbidden thing is just what we desire. You and I know what temptation is. The devil never shows himself as devil. The wrong was done, and, beguiled as the woman was, she gave to her husband. He took the fruit, and thus by man sin entered into the world.

In a moment of weakness the woman listened to the lie of the enemy, and Adam, with his eyes open and not deceived, followed her into the path of sin. Alas, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Sin is lawlessness, man doing his own will. Terrible fall for man; immense victory for Satan! What are the consequences? They are far-reaching and eternal. The pair knew good, without the power of doing it; and they knew evil, without the power of being able to withstand it. That is conscience. It is the knowledge of good and evil. There is not a man that does wrong but knows he does it. You have a conscience, and your conscience tells you when you do wrong. Thank God for conscience! I quite admit you may drug it, gag it, scar it or make it callous, from not heeding it and the hardening effect of sin, and then conscience refuses to act. There is not a living soul, however, whatever he be, or whoever he be, but when he does wrong knows it. Adam sinned, and knew it. You sin, and know it.

But, note, a man's sin ever carries consequences, and "the wages of sin is death." The first young man followed a woman in sin, and many a man here has followed woman into evil. Who can deny it? Ah, my friend, you have the stamp of death on you, and judgment is yet to come. "Thou shalt surely die," God had said. "Ye shall not surely die," said Satan. Who spoke the truth? But there is more than that. The eye was opened, and they knew they were naked. They went behind the trees of the garden when the Lord came down to speak and commune with the man. Yes, this young man puts the trees of the garden between himself and God. And God says, "Where art thou?" Oh what a question! He had sinned. He has a conscience, and he seeks to get away from God. He knew Him enough to fear and shun Him. Pitiable knowledge! He puts creation between himself and God. And what do you put between yourself and God? Your work, your comforts, your lusts, your business—everything. But mark, God says to every young man now, "Where art thou?" And, sinner, unless you have been converted and turned to the Lord, and have secured pardon through the blood of the Lord Jesus, the solemn query is still put. Young man, where art thou? Are you near God, or still hiding from Him? How serious is the question.

And what is Adam's answer to the Lord's question? "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid." Sin makes a man afraid. I recollect what led to the conversion of a young man in this city. He was working by the side of a godly old carpenter, who had taken a deep interest in him. "William," he

said one day, "when you get home to-night, will you go into your room, take a Bible, and just open the Bible at the third chapter of John? Then go down on your knees, and just say, 'There is no one in this room but God and me.'" The young man cried out, "I would not do that for the world." He was afraid to be alone with God. So are you, my unsaved friends. You are afraid of you don't know what. Conscience makes cowards of us all: sin makes a man afraid. Adam wanted to keep God at a distance. What folly! The Lord comes to him, and his reason is given. "I was afraid, because I was naked." He had garments of fig leaves, had he not? Yes, but it is all very well for a man to cover himself, and cover up his life, and history, and condition, as long as he is at a distance from God, but the moment he hears the voice of God, and by the conscience has been brought to see God, that moment he knows he is a ruined, naked, and guilty sinner. Every man has to feel that he is a sinner, and to learn whence redemption comes. But the Lord asks him further, and Adam lays the blame of his own sin on his wife, or, worse still, on God. "The woman whom *thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." We like to blame other people. The woman that God gave him for an helpmeet, I grant led him wrong, but he ought not to have been led wrong. He should have kept her straight, for he was at her side. Have you been led wrong? Don't you blame the woman or anybody else! Blame your own heart. Self-judgment is ever right.

How sad and sudden the effect of sin! Adam puts

the blame on God, and says in effect, "I should not have got into this mess but for her." Ah! what a paltry coward the sinner away from God is. The Lord then turns to the woman, and she puts the blame on the serpent. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Quite true! Throw the fault, if you can, off your own shoulder. You will never be able to hide it from God, and you cannot get away from the judgment of God, unless you get hidden in the merits of the wonderful death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God then addresses the serpent, and brings a judgment upon it: "The seed of the woman"—beautiful promise!—"shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." There would yet come into this same scene another man, the Saviour, the seed of the woman who first sinned. God's plan of redemption comes out to view in the moment of man's first sin. Man's need is met by God's resources; and in the moment we lose the earthly paradise, God says, I will open heaven to you—I will yet bring you to another, a better paradise. The antithesis of this scene is found in Luke xxiii., where the dying thief is assured of paradise. "Thou shalt bruise his heel." That refers to the cross and death of the Lord Jesus, who died for our sins that He might bring us to God now, and to His Paradise for ever.

Having pronounced their judgment, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," God clothes the pair with "coats of skins," that could only be obtained as the result of the victim's death. Man's ruin can only be met by death, and I do not doubt, in the clothing of this sad and guilty pair, you have a beautiful type of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus.

I must have Christ for my covering and clothing. There is all the difference in the world between the "apron" that man made, and the "coats of skins" which the Lord God made, and put on them. In Adam's apron God did not put a single stitch. That is man's effort to reform himself, his self-improvement, and his own works. All your efforts and mine are valueless ; we are as naked after as before. The coat that God made was His own work, and man had put no stitch in it. It is salvation by sovereign grace. If you are ever to be saved at all, it will only be by God. He brings that coat to Adam to hide his nakedness; and I can quite understand why the apostle Paul says, when looking to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Cor. v. 3). He, so to speak, says, "Do not be like Adam." He was found "naked," when he thought himself clothed. Too many will be like him by-and-by. Raised from the dead, being clothed—that is, having the body—they will be naked before God. They have not Christ as their covering before God.

The end of the first chapter of man's history is sadly solemn. And the Lord God said : "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So *he drove out the man* : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. iii. 22-24). Satan proved too

much for man at the beginning. He conquered him utterly by guile and deceit. Such was it with the first young man, and so has it been with all his descendants. Ruined, wretched, afraid of God, blaming his wife—knowing good, but unable to do it—knowing evil, and unable henceforth to abstain from it—under sentence of death—the practical slave of Satan, whom he credited rather than God—he is driven out of Eden into a wilderness! In this mercy was apparent. To have eaten the tree of life, and perpetuated an existence of misery on earth, would have been his crowning sorrow. God forbade that, as he “drove out the man.” But ere driven out, faith, which counts on God, would seem to have sprung up in his heart, for Adam called his wife’s name Eve, “because she was the mother of all living.” At the moment all were under the sentence of death; but God’s word as to the woman’s seed caused faith and hope to spring up, I cannot but believe.

One remark alone remains to be made. If the head of the race be fallen, are not all his family? If he needed redemption, do not all his posterity? If he, when sinless, was conquered by Satan, what son of his, born in sin, is a match for him? And if, in the moment of his first misery and anguish, Adam clutched at the Word of God, should not every young man follow in his footsteps in that respect? Surely. So again would I inquire, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

THE SECOND MAN—CONQUERING.

MATT. iii. iv. ; LUKE ii.-iv.

Lecture II.

WE have to-night a much happier subject before us than last Lord's Day evening. Then we saw in Genesis iii. the complete defeat and utter rout of the man to whom we are all related by nature. We saw the first man beaten, crushed, conquered, and utterly overcome of Satan, and finally driven out from Paradise by the righteous verdict of God. Yes, he was defeated, disgraced, and driven out into the world, where Satan, sin, and death have reigned right on till the moment of the coming into the world of Him about whom I have read to you this evening. It is no good for us to deny the fact that we all were related to that fallen man. We are all descendants of that man, and he is a ruined man,—a doomed man, an undone man, a lost man,—and so also are all his family. You are lost, young man, if you have not met Jesus. I do not know whether you have yet come across the path of this victorious Man of whom I have read, but if not, my earnest prayer is that you may to-night cross His path ere it be too late. He will bless you; He will save you! How do you know? you say. Because He has blessed and saved me, and this He did when I was about the age of most of you—twenty years old.

Four thousand years had rolled by since the time we spoke of last Lord's Day evening. That four

thousand years of the history of man and of the world, from Adam to Christ, had been marked on man's part by a continuous course of sin and disobedience. Man failed everywhere. Adam's eldest son slew his brother; Noah, put upon a new earth, became drunk. I wonder if any young man here has ever been similarly seen of God. You cannot point a finger at Noah. Noah was a sinner; so are you. Noah sinned; so have you. Pass down the stream of time. In Abraham's day man had become an idolater (see Josh. xxiv. 2). Let me take the history of Israel. The Lord gave to Aaron a wondrous privilege—that of the priesthood—yet the sons of Aaron offered strange fire to God. The mightiest and wisest king the world ever saw, about whose wisdom there is no doubt, and to whose magnificence nothing can in any wise compare,—for nothing has yet exceeded the glory of the reign of Solomon,—broke down utterly. He “loved many strange women,” and “his wives turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Kings xi. 1-13). The fact remains, the first man is a downright failure. His heart is at a distance from God, and he is a sinner in the springs of his nature. He is under the power of Satan; and, depend upon it, if the devil has got a hold of one, he is not going to give that man up in a hurry—not if he can help it.

But you say, I don't believe in the devil. Possibly not; but if you deny the personality of Satan, you seal your own condemnation. Mark that! If you deny the reality of the power of Satan and his personality, you will have to give up God's Christ, who appears on the scene, after the pathway of the first man—

oppressed and governed by Satan—had been one of sin, sorrow, misery, and distance from God for four thousand years. At length “the dayspring from on high” dawned on this world. I do not wonder that heaven went into an ecstasy when the blessed Jesus was born. I am not surprised that when the angels of the Lord announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem the glorious tidings, “Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke ii. 11), that heaven went into ecstasy. I would that your heart knew a little about it. Why did heaven go into ecstasy? I will tell you why. It recognised that if a Saviour sent of God had come there was a clear solution of the difficulty as to how man was to be saved from his lost condition. “God was manifest in the flesh.” The Eternal Son of God was to be man’s Saviour, come down from heaven to earth, and there appearing as “the Man Christ Jesus.”

His character and office were divulged in the words, “Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD.” Before His birth, His name was pronounced. “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” So heard Mary (Luke i. 31, 32).

Again, Joseph, His reputed father—for according to Jewish law, as soon as two were betrothed they were regarded as man and wife, hence Joseph was regarded as His father though we know he was not His father—ere the child was born, was thus addressed by the angel of the Lord, “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the

Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS." Charming name! There is no name like it. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Why? "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 20, 21). Are you among His people yet? Come, what man amongst you can honestly say, "I belong to His people"? "He shall *save* his people from their sins,"—that is the point. My friend, let me ask you, has the name of Jesus any charm for you? It is a precious name, and when the name of every man that the earth has thought much of has gone for ever and been forgotten, the name of Jesus shall be the song and eternal joy of His people! True, it is written, "Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?" (Ps. xli. 5). His name perish! Ah! thank God, never, never! Do you not know what God says? "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever" (Ps. xlv. 17). Thank God, I am among those worshipful rememberers; I hope you will be also, my friend. Think of it! His name perishing! Never! Thank God, He has died, but He died for us! He could die for us, just because He was exempt from death. Himself having died, and risen again, He has now a name above every name—the name of Jesus. And I want your heart to-night for that blessed Jesus, if it has never been won for Him before.

We get the account of our Lord's birth in the 2nd of Luke, and it also tells us of His childhood. There, in the words of Scripture, we are told He was subject to His parents, and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (chap. ii. 52).

At twelve years He is seen in the temple among the doctors,—not with the pertness of the present day, when many a child of twelve thinks that he knows far better about things than his father. What a beautiful moral picture! “They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.” The veil now drops for eighteen years, and what took place in these eighteen years Scripture is silent about, save that He was subject to His parents. “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” (Mark vi. 3) were apparently the words of careless and contemptuous unbelief. But I do not think these eighteen years were idle moments for the Blessed Lord. He was ever about His Father’s business. This blessed One, while Himself a real, true man, was the eternal Son of God, and had visited the earth in grace. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (John i. 14). God Himself, in human form, dwelt upon the earth. That is one side of the truth; but, on the other, that the Lord Jesus wrought with His own hands, in these years of seclusion and retirement, seems quite conclusive.

At length the moment arrived when God called forth His Son—this blessed, lowly, obedient Man,—and He came forth. What to do? To grapple with the foe that overcame the first man. At that time there was a great movement amongst the Jews. John the Baptist had been stalking through the land. A man of mighty power, he had been pressing home upon men their sins. John did not mince matters. All are sinners, and all have to meet God about their sins. You have sinned. I have. Every man has.

"All have sinned." Does God make light of sin? He would not be God if He did. You may make light of sin now, but by-and-bye you will not. John preached repentance and baptism unto the remission of sins. Men were troubled. Would to God they were troubled now! Men felt they were under the condemnation of God. They felt their sins. John could only tell them to be baptized for the remission of sins. He could not, as I do, preach present forgiveness to them. But while he was going on with his work, and preaching to repentant multitudes along the banks of the Jordan, an unknown Man draws near. As the 1st of John has it, "John saw Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus desired to be, and was baptized,—not surely as confessing sins, for He had none, but as taking His place in grace with the godly, who showed they were such by their actions,—and, having been baptized, the heavens were opened, and—striking fact—when He comes into public notice, you find Him a *praying* Man.

In Luke's Gospel you will find the Lord Jesus is seen before God in prayer seven times, and here is the first instance. You have before you here the sinless Man in perfect dependence on God, and to Him the Father says, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased;" and I shall show you, I trust from Scripture, one witness after another proving the sinless perfection of this blessed Man. He Himself said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) The officers of the Pharisees sent to take Him came back, overwhelmed by the grace and power of His words, and declared, "Never man *spake* like this

man" (John vii. 46). Pilate, when Christ was brought into his judgment hall, said three times over, "I find no fault in him" (John xviii. 38, xix. 4, 6). The dying thief said, "This man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke xxiii. 41). Paul wrote of Him that He "knew no sin," but was "made sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21). Another apostle says of Him, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22). And a final witness adds, "In him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). My friends, this is a unique Man. This Man stands alone in the glory of His person,—unique in the fact that He was absolutely sinless. But mark! he was a real man, a true man, a genuine man, a man as much as I am a man—sin alone excepted.

We have seen that when God introduced the first man he was "out of the earth, made of dust"; but "the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). What a wonderful thing that into a world of sin and death there should come a Man who was the Lord from heaven! He brought God to man in His life, and He brings man to God in righteousness by His death. We must not be carried away with the idea that the incarnation of this Blessed One has drawn man to God, or that because Christ became a man, man has somehow been lifted up to God. No such doctrine is in Scripture. His own words were, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). But, first of all, He is tried, tested, tempted, and proved, and, thank God! He comes out the victor—the conqueror of the one who conquered the first man; and when His victory over Satan was complete, and when He might have

retraced His steps to heaven with perfect freedom, what did He do? He turned and went down and died for you and me. To-night I say to you, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" And who is this Jesus? The Eternal Son of God. Jesus became man in this world in order to deliver man from the power of the enemy.

In Luke iii. we see that the Holy Ghost falls upon Him as the expression of His Father's delight in Him. God delights in this Man on the ground of His own perfection—His own sinless perfection. In this chapter, too, observe in passing, that the genealogy of Jesus is directly traced up to God. I wish to bear strenuous testimony against the idea that man is merely developed protoplasm, or, if you like, an improved descendant of an ape. Man has sprung from God, as the book of Genesis tells us, and when Jesus appears among men His genealogy, as a true veritable real man, is traced by way of Heli up to God. Had man sprung from the lower animals, here would have been the place to record such a fact, and we should have had, "Seth, which was of Adam, which was of the lower animals." Instead thereof we read, "which was of God" (Luke iii. 23-38). Again, we read, "We also are his offspring" (Acts xvii. 28).

Jesus was the Son of God in two ways. He was the Eternal Son—ever with the Father. But we read, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Heb. i. 5); He was therefore Son of God as man born in time. Then we read that "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." Observe that His temptation was in

the wilderness. Adam, on the other hand, was in paradise—Eden if you please—the garden of delight. He had everything to his hand. Everything that could possibly minister to his happiness and joy was given him by God, yet he fell into Satan's hand, and became the dupe and vassal of Satan from that day forth. Christ was led into the wilderness, and there was tempted forty days. He was not in paradise, but Scripture tells us "in the wilderness, forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts" (Mark i. 13). Not only was He with the brute creation, but observe there was nothing to meet or minister to Him. Scripture tells us He fasted for forty days. It was a time of perfect privation.

He was tempted of the devil for forty days, but the great temptation was at the end of the forty days, and it was three-fold, in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." It was the same three-fold temptation in the garden of Eden. When Eve "saw that the tree was good for food,"—that is the lust of the flesh,—“and that it was pleasant to the eyes,”—the lust of the eye,—“and a tree to be desired to make one wise,”—that is the pride of life,—“she took of the fruit thereof.” Satan passes before the Lord Jesus the same character of temptation. The first, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread," was a *personal* temptation—Help yourself, use your own power. The second is a *worldly* temptation; Satan offers Him all the kingdoms of the world, if He will give up His allegiance to God. The last temptation is of a *spiritual* nature. He would be an object of interest to every one. In the first place Satan says, "Take care of yourself,

think of yourself, make these stones into bread. Do better for yourself than God has done for you." That was a personal temptation. In the second place he shows Him the whole of the kingdoms of the world in a moment, and says, "I will give you a good place in the world." How many a young man has sold his soul for a good place in the world! Alas! how many! Lastly, Satan would have Him put God to the test by casting Himself from the pinnacle of the temple.

A clever man once said to me, "I don't believe in this story of a personal devil, the devil is inside a man." What is the devil then? You reply, The devil is the proclivity in a man's own heart to evil. You believe that? Stop! If that be true we cannot be saved. Why? The answer is simple. If you think that the devil is the proclivity in man's heart to evil, you have at once to admit that there were proclivities to evil in the heart of Jesus, for He was a man, and was "tempted of the devil," and so you have lost the Saviour. The man with proclivities to evil in his heart cannot be your Saviour nor mine. No, no, my friends, God's Word is plain and distinct. There were no proclivities to evil in Jesus, yet He was tempted of the devil. Thank God, He was a sinless Man, and we have in this passage Satan coming up and testing Him with this temptation of a three-fold character.

What is His defence? He only quotes Scripture. He is a truly dependent Man, and clings to God, and God only, and how does He meet the devil? With the sword of the Spirit in His hand—the Word of God—and not merely the Word of God, but *quoted as the Word* of God. Jesus rebuts and defeats the devil, only by quoting Scripture as being the Word of God.

"It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," defeats the first assault. The second temptation is met in the same way. The devil takes Him up and shows Him the kingdoms of the world. Christ knows that they belong to Him, but He will not take the world in its sinful state. He will have the kingdoms of the world, but that will be on the ground of redemption, and He will have them from God's hand, and not from the devil's hand. His answer is simple again, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The last temptation suggested that Christ should throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to test God, and make Himself an attraction. If you got to the top of the Scott Monument, and were perfectly certain that you could throw yourself down without injuring yourself, I am sure not one of you would refuse to do it. You would attempt it, just to show that you could do it, and you would be an object of interest to all. That is the pride of life.

It is well to note that Satan can quote Scripture to trap the unwary. He quotes, or rather misquotes, Scripture in this last temptation, citing from the 91st Psalm—"He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But have you observed that the devil omits four little words? God had said, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee *in all thy ways*." The devil dropped those words out. Since that day often has he misquoted Scripture to tempted souls, and has turned them into paths of sin and

danger. But Jesus knew the Scriptures, clung to Him who had written them, and by dependence gained a moral victory over Satan, who then "departed from him for a season."

Before I leave this part of my subject, however, I may add a few words that may help you. Moses, we are told now-a-days, is to be regarded as a very old-fashioned, obsolete, and unreliable author. In fact, it is very boldly affirmed that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. If, therefore, you will be counted wise, and up to date, you will have to entirely disregard the Pentateuch, and cut these five books right out of your Bibles. That is what our learned religious infidels, and higher-criticism professors, are telling us now-a-days. It is a very remarkable thing, however, that in this three-fold assault Jesus answers Satan from the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch only, which, later in His life, He frequently attributes to Moses. We had better hold with Jesus than with His foes in this matter. These wiseacres, that are cutting up Scripture now-a-days, forget that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. God's Word is what the devil hates. He cannot abide Scripture; and the secret of the strength of the young men—in the sense in which John speaks of them, as being Christians, of course—lies in their possession of the Word of God. I believe some of you here are Christians. If you will go on growing in the knowledge and the service of the Lord, and if you are going to get the victory over the devil, you will only do so by the use of Scripture; for it, and it alone, is the sword of the Spirit.

But look again at this scene in Luke iv. It is beautiful! Satan retires beaten. We saw last Lord's

Day the first man driven out from Eden. Satan was the conqueror, the victor, and man was defeated ; but here I find that a Man leaning in dependence upon God has defeated Satan at every point. I read, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Satan retired beaten, and he is always beaten when we quote Scripture as the Word of God. Young men, study it ; may it be precious to your souls ; make it the man of your counsel, the man of your right hand. First of all, the Word lets you know that you are saved by faith in Jesus, and then it guides and helps you through the pathway in this scene. We must meet temptation. I do not think the devil tempts sinners—they he governs, and impels to evil. He only tempts God's children. His own cohorts he leads on blindfold to eternal ruin. He does not need to tempt them ; they are in his power. He places temptation before the man who is out of his power. The man who is in his power he leaves alone. If Christ has not delivered you, you are still the vassal of the devil, and are under his influence, for he "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. xii. 9).

Mark now how the Lord proceeds. Having defeated the enemy, He goes out into the world to deliver man, and His pathway is one of goodness and mercy. Miracles of mercy on every hand proclaim Him to be the Son of God, and the Christ of God. When you come to the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel you find Him going up to the top of the mountain, where He is transfigured before three of His disciples ; while the Father again confesses Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." He might have passed up into glory from the mount of

transfiguration, but instead of that He turns in grace and goes down to die, that others, redeemed by His death, may be associated with Him in the glory of which He is deemed worthy as Man. As He goes down He casts out devils once more; and one of His servants—John—comes and tells Him, “We saw one casting out devils in thy name,” His name was mighty, “and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke ix. 49, 50).

Well, you say, I think I am for Him. Stop. At that moment He claimed all that were not against Him, as being for Him. If you pass on to chapter xi. the whole thing is reversed. There His opposers were beginning to say, “He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils” (ver. 15). His reply is remarkable,—“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is *not with me is against me*: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (vers. 21-23). You see the point. If you are not thoroughly *for* Him, you are *against* Him. That is how Christ regards you. But who is the strong man? I have no doubt it is the devil: the strong man is Satan. He is too strong for you, and too strong for me—for every man. And how is he armed? I will tell you. He is armed with what will overcome you, and with what will keep your conscience quiet. He says to a young man, “What is the good of your thinking now of your soul? you will have plenty of time yet when you are old.”

Stay ! who gave you a lease of your life, who gave you the assurance that you will see to-morrow morning? that you will not be launched into eternity? I only heard to-night of a doctor who went to visit a patient on Thursday. The lady called attention to his looking ill. "There is not much the matter," said he, and promised to look in the following day. She looked for him on the morrow, but he did not come, and what was the reason? He was dead. He had poisoned his finger while dressing the foul wound of a patient; his own finger being scratched, had absorbed the poison, and he died within the twenty-four hours. If within twenty-four hours you were to die, where would you spend eternity? You had better know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. There is a strong man holding you, but there is yet a stronger—Jesus. The world is Satan's palace, and sinners are his goods; but there is a Saviour—a blessed Saviour. And how does he become a Saviour? By coming down and dying for men. The query, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" has its answer in Christ and His work. "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered" (Isa. xlix. 24, 25). Christ as conqueror of the mighty is the deliverer of the captive sinner.

You must have to do with this stronger Man. If you do not meet Him in the day of grace, you will have to meet Him in the day of judgment. Already has He stood at man's bar, and been rejected of man. Pilate said, "Behold the man!" in the day when His foes clamoured for His blood; and you know the end

of the story, how they crowned Him with thorns, and nailed Him on the cross between two thieves. It was at that juncture that one dying thief, turning to the other, said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke xxiii. 40, 41). Mark these words, "This man hath done nothing amiss." I tell you of the death of a Man who did nothing amiss. I think I hear that poor dying thief saying to his neighbour, "You and I never did a right thing, and here is a Man who never did a wrong thing, and I am going to trust that Man." His faith found vent in the prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." To that cry of faith Jesus replied, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." We saw a thief driven out of man's paradise because of sin, last Sunday night; and to-night I see a thief going into God's paradise, on the ground of redemption, with the Saviour who dies for him. Blessed news is that for you and me.

Thus then did Jesus die, and after three days God raised Him. I know they put guards round the tomb, and sealed it to boot. What sealed that tomb? Fear! Who put guards round the tomb? Cowards! Only think of it! Guarding a dead man. It was the desire of the world to keep Him in the grave; but they could not. I believe Christ arose before the stone was rolled away; but the stone was rolled away to let you and me look in, to see therein the proofs of the victory of the risen and victorious Saviour. That is the glorious fruit of the cross. You see the wages of sin is death. Death was the evidence of Satan's victory.

over the first man. Christ has gone down to death for the glory of God, for the blessing of man, and for the destruction of Satan's power. I do not doubt Satan thought he had scored a great success when the world witnessed Christ's death, but it was the most foolish thing he ever did. Christ has gone into death and annulled it. He has gone into the stronghold of Satan, and has demolished it. He has also put away sin. He has met the claims of God in righteousness. He has annulled death, and defeated Satan. He has wrought the work which gives you a righteous title to go where He is now. He was not defeated by death. No, no! His apparent defeat was His most glorious victory. As the little hymn sweetly says:—

“ By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown ;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.

He hell in hell laid low ;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew :
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so ;
And death by dying slew.”

By death He overthrew the power of Satan. He rose from the dead, and what is the next thing? God calls on men everywhere to repent because “ he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead ” (Acts xvii. 31).

Jesus is now exalted at God's right hand. It is as the triumphant Victor that He is now seen by faith there. His exaltation is the witness on God's part of His delight in Him, and of His absolute satisfaction

in the work which He accomplished in His death. His brow is glory-crowned as the answer to His sorrow, suffering, and death. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31). These gifts of grace the glorious Conqueror bestows in righteousness on the men whom Satan vanquished. Who of you has received them?

Observe, you will have to meet Jesus. You may see Him now by faith. You and I must meet the Lord by-and-bye, for we are told "every eye shall see him." Every eye,—your eye, my eye, shall see Him. Would you like to see Him? If you were never the Lord's before, be so to-night! Make up your mind for the Lord to-night. "He that is not for me is against me," and those who are not for Him are yet on the side of the prince of this world. Let your heart be won for Christ. Lose no time! You are a sinner, a child of Adam, sentenced to death,—a ruined, sinful, fallen man, with death, and the grave, and eternal judgment staring you in the face. But there has come into this world One, who has become a man so that He might die. You and I die because we are men, but He became a man that He might die, and is now risen and seated at the right hand of God, and is saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Look up and see the ascended, victorious Saviour. Look up and see the One who has grappled with the foe and beaten him. Look up and trust the One who is a living Saviour at God's right hand. Will you not believe Him, guilty soul, from this night?

My friends, do you think it is a poor thing for a

young man to be an out-and-out Christian? There is nothing grander, finer, more splendid than for a young man to be on the Lord's side, and I thank God, from the bottom of my heart, that I was converted when young, for the last three-and-thirty years have been spent in the Saviour's interests, instead of in the service of the devil. If you have not yet decided to be upon the Lord's side, I pray you come to Him now. God bless you, and save you to-night.

TWO LEADERS WITH MANY FOLLOWERS

GENESIS iv.

Lecture III.

EVERY young man in this meeting is following either one or other of the two young men that the 4th of Genesis brings before us. You have—so have I—gone in the way of Cain, and are in that way still, or you have followed Abel. They are the two leaders, I am bold to say, of the whole race of man; and every man in this audience, every man on the face of the earth at this moment, is either walking in “the way of Cain,” or has followed the footsteps of Abel. But, to tell the truth, that cannot be a good way of which we are told, “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain” (Jude 11). Are you yet in “the way of Cain,” or have you found your path in the footsteps of Abel? What is the difference between these two men? One of them did not know the way to approach God, and the other did. Cain did not know the divinely appointed way into God’s presence. Abel did know that way, and took it. God gives us, I doubt not, in the opening chapters of man’s history upon earth a picture of what would mark him all along the line.

Cain was the eldest son of Adam, and Abel was the second. It has been thought that they were twin brothers, but whether that is so or not they came one close upon the heels of the other. They lived together, were brought up together, and had the same oppor-

tunities of learning God's thoughts—just as there may be in this audience to-night two brothers who have had the same privileges of knowing the Gospel, but one through the grace of God is God-fearing, and the other is not. Well, happy is the man who is God-fearing. Blessed is the man that is in the way of Abel. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain," says Scripture. And what was Cain's way? It was the way of nature, mere natural religion apart from faith in the revelation God had given.

Cain was by occupation a tiller of the ground. Abel was a shepherd. Cain was a husbandman,—a farmer, if you like,—and his heart was much engrossed with the ground that he was busy tilling. "In process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord" (Gen. iv. 3). He began to think he must draw near to God. It was a good thought. What man would dare to say that it was not a good thing to draw near to God?

Cain was right in his thought, wrong in his way of so doing. He was going to draw near to God. Recollect you too will have to meet God. You must meet God. Every one, sooner or later, must meet Him, if not in time then in eternity. Every hearer of mine to-night must meet God. Whatever your age, whatever your class, whatever your rank in society, or level in this world, you must have to say to God, you must meet God, and have to do with God. The point is, What road will you take to Him in order to be accepted?

Now observe, Cain draws near to God with an offering of the fruit of the ground—the product of his own labour; and, on the other hand, we find that

“Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect” (vers. 4, 5). There could be nothing more distinct and contrasted than this action of God with regard to these offerings, and the offerers who brought them. The one He accepts, the other He rejects. Cain is the rejected man, while Abel is the accepted man. Wherein lay the difference? They were both sons of the same parents. They were both the offspring of the same father and mother. They were both sinners. Their parents had sinned, and they too were sinners. God has declared in His Word that “all have sinned,” and we too have sinned. Cain and Abel felt they were at a distance from God, but they would draw near to God,—in plain language, they would be worshippers.

I daresay a great many of you have taken the ground of being worshippers. Is it in Cain’s way or Abel’s? That is a serious, a most important question. I do not know any question more important. Observe that Cain draws near, but upon what ground? He brings to God the outcome of his own diligence—the fruit of the earth. And you may say, Was he not doing right? was he wrong in giving to God the fruit of the diligence of his life? But stop! Do you know what Cain really did? If you understand that,—and I think we have all gone in the “way of Cain” to begin with,—you will see he entirely overlooked the fact of the fall. It is the fashion now-a-days to overlook the fall. He overlooked the fact that he was outside God’s presence, as a sinner, and because of sin. It pleased him to forget the fact that sin had come in

between God and man, and that man was a sinner, away from God. It is sin that shuts man out from the presence of God, and Cain was outside God's presence. How then is he to draw near to God? He must draw near in the way that suits God, and that is in keeping with the character of God.

Abel, knowing that he is guilty, and unable to draw near to God as he is, sets the death of another between himself and God. He recognises the judgment of sin, and has faith in a sacrifice by which expiation of sin is effected. Cain has not the conscience of sin, for he brings as his offering the fruits which are a sign of the curse. His heart is blinded, and his conscience hardened. He takes for granted that all is well between him and God, and that he will be received. Why should he not be? The just sense of sin and ruin is completely wanting, as also any knowledge of the right way to draw near to God.

You may turn to me and say, But how could Cain know the way that suited God? I reply, How did Abel learn it? That he learned it is certain. There are two men sitting side by side to-night in this room, and one has learned the way to God, and the other has not. Wherein lies the difference? Are not both sinners? Yes! Were not Cain and Abel equally sinners in the sight of God? They were. The Spirit of God reveals the secret of the difference in each case. "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. xi. 4). I wonder if you ever heard a dead man speak yet? You say, A dead man speak? That would be the

last man I would expect to listen to. A dead man speaks to you to-night, and he plainly says, You will never get to God if you don't go in the way I went. What does Abel say? He tells you the truth in the simplest language possible: I put between my sinful soul and God the dead body of a sinless victim offered in sacrifice.

Abel teaches us the way to God most clearly, as he puts between his guilty soul and God the body of the victim offered in sacrifice. He had the knowledge that death was upon him, and that he was a sinner out of God's presence. Death was ahead of him, as well as judgment. You may say, But how did he learn it? He had heard how God had dealt in righteous judgment with his parents in the moment of the fall. His parents had doubtless told him the sad tale of sin, and its judgment, which Genesis iii. records. You too have learned the truth from your parents. Whether it has yet brought forth fruit in your life is another question. God knows that, and you know too. Clearly the parents of these two young men had told them of how they had been driven out of the garden of Eden, and of the way in which God had clothed them with the skins of beasts. Abel had believed and deeply profited by this lesson, while Cain ignored it.

Abel, so to speak, is heard saying:—I am a sinner, I am under sentence of death, and I know the wages of sin is death; and the only way I can draw near to God is by putting between Him and me the dead body of a sinless victim; that sacrifice I will offer, and upon that ground I will draw near to Him. BY FAITH he offered unto God "a more excellent sacrifice." And he found he was accepted. You have the very kernel

of Christianity foreshadowed in his action. You have the truth of the cross, and of the death of the Lord Jesus for poor sinners like you and me. Abel's action most simply points to the cross, and to the death of the Saviour in the room and stead of the guilty sinner. That is the lesson I learn from his action.

Now Cain's road, on the other hand, only ends in rejection, death, and judgment. It never leads to God. Abel's path leads certainly to the knowledge of acceptance with God, "BY FAITH Abel offered unto God a MORE EXCELLENT sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was RIGHTEOUS, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." He is one of the wonderful cloud of witnesses to the value of faith, found in Hebrews xi., and if I put him in the witness-box, and inquire, Abel, what have you to say? he replies, I am accepted. By whom? By God. How were you accepted—on the ground of your works? I had none; I brought forth nothing but sin. I am accepted on this ground. By faith I put between my guilty soul and God the dead body of a spotless victim. I offered the firstling of the flock, and the fat,—the excellence thereof,—and God accounted me righteous. He accepted me in the value and excellence of my offering. That is a good testimony from a dead man.

Cain is dead also, but he does not speak. Ah! no, Cain has no helpful cheery voice from the dead. God gives you His commentary about him. The Holy Ghost says:—"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain." And yet Cain's way is the popular way, mark that! It is the way ninety-nine men out of every hundred go to-day. Go down the

street and ask the first man you meet if he is *sure* that he is on his road to heaven. With complacent self-satisfaction his answer will be: "Nobody can know that with certainty, but I am doing my best. I am religious, and take the sacrament, and give of my substance for God's work. What more can I do?" Take the second man, he will say: "I don't like that sort of question put to me. Of course I am not what I should be, but I am not so bad as many, and God is merciful." A third man will reject you and your query with scorn, and if you put the Gospel before him, will put it aside. It is a solemn day we live in.

Cain's way has great attractions for multitudes, for, mark you, he was religious! I don't think he was a sceptic—an infidel. I do not think he was a hypocrite. He was the man who inaugurated mere human religion, and became the leader of countless thousands of men, who start and continue their course in life by ignoring the fact of the gravity of sin, and of the reality of the breach that sin has brought in between God in His holiness, and man in his guilt. Cain ignored the truth of the fall. I can draw near to God—he practically said—on the ground of that which I can myself do, on the ground of that which I have produced,—and he digs and delves, labours and tills, toils and sweats; he reaps his corn, and presses his wine, and with a well-dressed sheaf, and a flagon of well-pressed wine, he draws near to God. And then what is the result? God does not accept his sacrifice nor him. Why? He was bringing the fruit of the ground, already cursed. The curse of God had fallen upon the earth previous to this, and that Cain

ignored also. The ground came in for the curse by Adam's sin. Creation has shared in the fall of Adam. He was creation's lord—but he fell, and as a result vanity has come into the scene, and now the earth shares in the fortunes of her fallen lord.

All this Cain forgot, as well as that he was a lost man, a ruined sinner, and at a distance from God. And, my friends, it is a very easy thing to forget that ; it is very easy for you and me to ignore it. Man needs to wake up to the fact that he is a sinner. You say, Who do you mean? I mean you, myself, and every man. God has left no man out. Man as man has sinned, and between your soul and God there is at this moment—if you have not yet been born of God, and brought to Him through the blood of Jesus—a distance, a terrible distance, and it is a good thing when a man feels it. Cain ignored the distance. In calm indifference of soul he chose to draw near to God. And people to-day walk in "the way of Cain," and think that by their own doings, their prayers, their religious exercises, and by a meritorious life, they may draw near to God.

Such cases abound. I saw a lady, a few days ago, who said, "I wish I could die." "I hope you will not," I replied, "for I don't think you are ready." "But I think I am ready," she rejoined, "for I say my prayers regularly. Will not my prayers avail?" "No, your prayers will not avail. Man does not get to God and receive forgiveness of sins by his prayers. Scripture says, that 'without shedding of blood is no remission' (Heb. ix. 22). And again it says, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness'" (Rom. iv. 5).

The man who verily thinks that by his prayers his sins can be washed away, is truly in "the way of Cain." He thought that the activity of his life, and the fruits gathered from it, could fit him—a sinner—to stand before God! What folly! If you are in "the way of Cain," may God arrest you to-night. That road ends in eternal ruin, depend upon it. "WOE UNTO THEM! for they have gone in the way of Cain," says the Holy Ghost. You had better get into the way of Abel. What did Abel do? He presented the firstling of his flock. He learned by faith that there must be between him and God the spotless victim, that tells of death undergone. That victim he offered, and God accepted him.

Now, how can you and I get salvation? Only by faith in God's blessed Son. The lamb offered by Abel was a striking type of the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," said the Baptist (John i. 29). As I look back at the cross, I see the wonderful truth that between two malefactors there died the sinless, spotless Man—the Lamb of God—for hell-deserving sinners. What then shall I do? Shall I endeavour to put myself right with God by my own endeavours, or shall I put between my soul and the holiness of God the wonderful truth that Jesus died, and died for me? I will follow Abel. I was in "the way of Cain" for a good many years, until I found that the way of Abel was the best,—that it was the way of salvation,—for it is God's way, being of faith.

What is faith? Faith is the principle that links the soul with God. Cain is the leader and first exponent of what I may term natural religion, for spite of his

sin—yea, because of it—man is a religious being. He has the sense that there is a supreme Being, and knows he must appear before that Being sooner or later, and he gets filled with the thought that he must propitiate Him, and do something that will fit him for God's presence. Hence he often strives in order to do that something. Many a young man has done that, when he has found out through practical failure that he is a faulty creature. Many a young fellow sets out from his father's house with his pockets well lined. He finds the world a fine place as long as he has plenty of money. While you have plenty of money, you will be asked out, and much made of. But let the resources dry up, and you are not able to do as you formerly did. How shortsighted will your friends become! When the nap of your coats, and the silk on your hats have become worn, and you are a little shabby, it is strange how suddenly your old chums fail actually to know you. The world seeks you when you are a pigeon to be plucked, and whenever that is done it throws you over. The world wants you as long as you can be of use to it, and no longer. When that day arrives, it bids you good-bye. That is the world. There is many a man who has experienced that, and has learned what a disappointing thing it is. Then it often is that a man, weary of the world, seeks rest in natural religion. He tries "the way of Cain." A round of religious exercises is commenced, in the hope that these may expiate his sins. "I will appease Him with a present," is man's thought of God. But this is fatal folly, for "without shedding of blood is no remission" is God's irrevocable dictum. Works never saved a man yet, nor ever will

How absolutely in contrast with this is God's way of dealing with needy man. He loves to bless him, and his need only becomes the occasion for the display of God's grace. This is displayed in the cross of Jesus, which is the perfect answer to all our need as guilty sinners before God. What you could not do, Christ has done. There has been laid down before God the spotless life of Jesus, in order to our redemption, and to bring to God the guilty sons of men, who simply believe in Him, and trust in Him, and who, like Abel, put Him as the sacrifice between their guilty souls and God. If you have not believed in Jesus, turn to Him now. Come to the Saviour now, yield your heart to Him. His blood cleanses from all sin. Truly, "it speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Observe that God accepts Abel on the ground of his sacrifice, and does not accept Cain on the ground of his works. What was the next thing? "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Is not that strange? I have known people get terribly angry when they have heard a simple Christian say he knew he was saved. You may ask me, Are you saved? Thank God, yes; saved for time and eternity. Christ has died for me, given Himself for me, and it is alone through Him that I am saved. Ah! says one, I don't believe that. Don't you? But, my friend, I do. I know it certainly, on the same authority as Abel. Had you met Abel coming away with a beaming face, and said, You look happy, Abel! would he not have replied, "I have a good right to be so; I am accepted by God, and know it"? But what have you done to ensure this? Nothing. I have brought

to God nothing that I did. God has accepted me on the ground of the death of another, and He has told me so.

It was this assurance of acceptance by God which Abel possessed that so provoked his elder brother. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth?" If a man says, I don't believe that any one can know he is forgiven, then I know he is not forgiven himself. If you were forgiven, you would know what I know, viz., the joy of a present salvation through faith in a glorified Saviour, and the precious privilege of serving Him. Acknowledge that you are in "the way of Cain," and you may get out of that way. That is what I am here for to-night. I want to get you out of "the way of Cain," and into the way of Abel. I want to get you to know and to enjoy the truth of God's salvation. But how is that obtained? By the acceptance first of the fact that you are ruined, and then by the acceptance of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If there has never sprung up in your heart trust in the Lord Jesus, and if you have not yet found salvation, then I beseech you to listen to the voice of Abel, that dead man who yet speaks. What does he say? "Trust the sacrifice, sinner; put between your guilty soul and God the body of the spotless victim. Between my soul and God I put one that was the type of Him who is to be placed between your soul and God, and I am accepted." Truly "he being dead, yet speaketh."

Cain's voice, we have seen, is silent. Cain had the same opportunity of securing acceptance and blessing as Abel, but he missed it. Mark that! "And the

Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin (or, a sin-offering) lieth at the door." The Lord says in effect to Cain: You can go and do as Abel did. Follow your brother. Why don't you take his road? Alas! Cain did not like it; and a little while after, he "talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him."

Do you know why he slew him? Four thousand years after this terrible murder, God gives the reason for it. In 1 John iii. 11 and 12, He says, "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And *wherefore slew he him?* because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." God tells us here that the way of Cain was evil,—his "works," supposed to be suited to God, were evil. Unsaved sinner, although religious, your works are evil. It is no good to deny it. We would like to credit ourselves with good; but when the Holy Ghost draws down the veil four thousand years after, He lets us have a good look into Cain's heart. His works were evil, and therefore his wrath appeared, and he slew his brother. Only think, he was guilty of committing murder because he was angry that his brother was accepted, and he himself was not; and so has it been in the world since.

Who slew the Saviour? Who caused Christ to be crucified? The world. You and I, in our own way, were morally in the crowd that said, "Away with him." Indeed we were. But what is it that breaks the heart

and wins the soul? It is the discovery that Jesus stooped from Godhead glory, and became a man in this scene, and suffered Himself to be led to the cross, that He might save us, and bring us to God in righteousness. Ah! may you learn this night that Christ loved you. From this night forth may you take God's salvation. My friend, get out of Cain's road, get clear of that path! What is the first step in that path? Cain drew near to God on wrong ground, and then was angry because he was not accepted; whereas his brother drew near by faith, and on right ground, and was accepted. Thereon Cain's wrath makes him imbrue his hands in the blood of his brother.

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?" Look how he faces up to God. Cain gets bold in his sin, and he says, when God asks him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" Then God says, "What hast thou done?" That is a grave question for God to put to a man. God knows what you have done. God knows the whole history of your life, and He puts this query to you to-night, "What hast thou done?" You may say, I have not slain my brother. Possibly not, but have you not been angry with your brother? Have you never said in wrath, God damn you? Aye! and had you the power to do it, you would have done it. I am only speaking the truth. I know what man can say in his heart.

"What hast thou done?" we hear then is God's solemn query to Cain; and thereafter He says, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The righteous martyr has been slain as a witness for the truth, and what follows? God says to

Cain, "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." And Cain departs from God, and proves that he is one. He does not like to be called a vagabond, but that is really what man is by nature. Do you know what vagabond means? It means a man who is always on the move—a man that is never settled—never at rest. That is a vagabond, according to Scripture.

The next thing we read of Cain is that he "went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod." Do you know what "Nod" means? It means "wandering." The land was named Nod, and men have since then been wandering truly. And Cain "builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch." He builds a city. He as it were says, I have gone out from the presence of God, but I will try to make myself as happy and as comfortable as possible; I will build a city, and will forget that I am a vagabond, and I will forget that I am a sinner. Thus Cain started what you and I now call the world.

It is very instructive to see what follows. One of his descendants, Lamech, has two wives, and has children. You observe the names of his children, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain. Sometimes people say what is the use of recording all these names. Why are Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain mentioned? The reason is that God wishes to give us the story of Cain's "way" and Cain's "world." The meaning of Jabal is "moving." He was a true son of Cain, always

on the move—always wanting something new. That is the spirit of the world. You must have everything new. You must have a new opera—a new song—a new book, or a new novel. You must have something new. Everything is new, in order to allure and entrap man. Jabal's name is characteristic of the world, "moving." "He was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle." He was the example in the East of what you would call well-to-do people. He was in that sense the starter of commerce. Jubal, whose name means "playing," was "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." There comes in pleasure; and the next is Tubal-cain, "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron,"—the scientific man. I believe that in the names of these three men you will find the three-fold cord that really binds up society at present.

"Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle." He was the man that started commerce. He was the inaugurator of the commercial world. Jubal did not care for money-making. His name—"playing"—bespoke his character, and he says, I will go in for pleasure. Jabal, you may get money, if you like, but I am going in for pleasure; and "he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." Jabal went in for money, and Jubal for music; while Tubal-cain was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron,"—in other words, science and art; that is, I doubt not, the scientific world. Take out of the world the man of commerce, the man of pleasure, and the man of science, and you will find the world empty—cleaned out. Money, music, and science formed Cain's world

at the start, and by them Satan holds the world in his hand now more than ever.

What a world to be part and parcel of! What a miserable start, and what will its end be? Cain does not find acceptance with his offering, so he turns round with murderous anger upon the man who is accepted, and then he goes out into the world determined to make himself as happy as possible without God. How many men in this audience to-night are exactly in the same position? Follower of Jabal, do you say, I am going to add bank-note to bank-note. My friend, you brought nothing into the world, and it is certain you will take nothing out of it. It is better to lay up heavenly riches. How many here are among the Jubalites, seeking pleasure only? But how long will your pleasure last? You will have "the pleasures of sin for a season." That is not good enough for me. I want something for eternity, and, thank God, I have got it. Faith can say, "At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." I must have something both for time and eternity. Are you a votary of Tubal-cain, a devotee of the scientific world, with its ever-increasing stores of knowledge? It is a very interesting world, Tubal-cain's; but it is not after all a satisfactory world; and if you go into eternity without the knowledge of Christ, your life will be a dead failure. If, on the other hand, you are a Christian, truly and simply, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have the knowledge of eternal life now, and you will have the sense of the favour of God. You will furthermore be the servant of Christ—the servant of God; and if so you will look back,—whether your life be long or short,—when you are passing away, and

will thank God that you were led to decide for Christ when you were young.

I never knew a man who repented that he was converted. I have known many men repent on their death-bed that they were unconverted. Let me tell you, that if you to-night, through grace, get into the way of Abel, and trust in the Lord, you will bless God for ever for moving your feet out of "the way of Cain." In the way of Abel you will find the pathway to God. He was the leader to glory. He leads you to glory—to God ; but Cain has only led men to the lower depths of eternal damnation. "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain," is an awful imprecation. Avoid its application to your own soul, I beseech you.

Now let me ask, Whose leadership are you following? Is it Cain's or Abel's? Do not hesitate to answer. Eternal issues hang on your reply. Doubtless, Cain's road is the more pleasant to nature. Natural religion, with its routine of religious services, aided by what pleases the senses of man, has an undoubted charm. But, alas! it is not divine, and the end of that way is woe—eternal woe. The pathway of Abel is purely one of faith, but it leads to God, although martyrdom be met on the road. If you simply believe in Jesus, you will find that you are "accepted in the Beloved." Your sins are all washed away in the precious blood of the Son of God, and you are the possessor of eternal life. You are a glory-bound soul, with a flawless title to that glory—viz., the blood—and a prospect that has not a cloud in it, nor ever can have, for Christ is your Life, your portion, and your hope. Happy is the man whose feet go not in "the way of Cain," but who follows the example of Abel,

JOSEPH; OR, TEMPTATION & TRIUMPH

GENESIS xxxvii.-xlvii.

Lecture IV.

THERE is no doubt whatever that Joseph is a very striking and beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not so I should not have sought to bring his history before you to-night. Just as Joseph became the saviour of all in Egypt, and of his brethren too, by the foresight which God gave him to display in the storing up of the corn, so Jesus, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, now rejected by man, but exalted by God, is the only Saviour for men in their need as sinners. The parallel of Joseph and Jesus is very striking.

Joseph first comes before you as a young man of seventeen (Gen. xxxvii. 2),—I daresay a good many of you are about that age,—and we find that his father sends him a journey, saying, “Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and bring me word again” (ver. 14). Similarly, of the blessed Lord we read, “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John iv. 14). Did the world know Him? Ah, no! “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John i. 10, 11). So was it here. Joseph no sooner appears among his brethren, than they plot, as you know, for his death. He had had a dream, and in that dream he had seen their sheaves of corn bowing down to his

sheaf. He had also had a second dream, and seen the sun, moon, and stars doing obeisance to him.

They could not bear the idea of his exaltation. They hated him, whom they called "this master of dreams" (ver. 19), and therefore plotted for his death; but Reuben rescued him, and says, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit." You know what happened thereafter. He was sold to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver. I need not tell you that Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver—the price of the meanest slave. Here Joseph was sold to be a slave, and was carried away captive to Egypt, and he is lost sight of for the moment. The last thing we get in chapter xxxvii., is that "the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard," and you hear nothing of Joseph in chapter xxxviii. In it God gives us a little about Judah. I do not read it; perhaps you will do so. You who have a Bible at home, or in your lodgings, just read the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis, and note the dreadful tale of lust, sin, and wickedness on the part of Judah, one of Joseph's brethren, which it reveals. I need not dwell upon it. It is a gruesome story, but a plain unvarnished tale of what man can do. But that is the beauty of the Bible. God tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about man and his sin and folly, and thus shows how His grace can superabound where sin has so abounded. Who would have thought that Pharez (ver. 29) would have been in the direct genealogy of the Saviour? But so it is (*see* Matt. i. 3).

Sometimes people attack the Bible, and say, See what things are told in Scripture. I will tell you why,

God paints man as he is, not as he would like to appear. What he is, and what he can do, is recorded, with no toning down. Scripture tells the truth, whether man likes it or not. There are a great many young men here to-night who would not like their life to be written, and read in public. Come, now, I appeal to you, would you like your life, and the history of the gratification of your lust and sin to be read in public? Ah, no, I don't believe you would! There is many a man here who has a conscience, and he would say, "God forbid that my life should be made public." I agree with him. The point is, let the life be such that you would not be ashamed to have it all published. Such was Joseph's. Judah never thought that the whole of his sin with his daughter-in-law was to be made public; but I judge that God has told us what chapter xxxviii. records, because it is all in the sharpest contrast with chapter xxxix. While Joseph is still a young man, he is there seen under temptation of the most terrible kind. Pressure of no ordinary character is brought to bear upon him by his master's wife, to induce him to walk in the steps of Judah. Let us see how he escapes the snare set for his feet.

The tempted but godly youth says to Potiphar's wife, "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" How many young men in this house to-night would have so answered? How many are convicted that they have been guilty of what Joseph calls "great wicked-

ness"? Ah, my friends, fornication and adultery are thought little of in this world, provided it be not found out ; but don't you forget that it is written, " Whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge " (Heb. xiii. 4). God has spoken in the plainest possible language on this point from one end of Holy Writ to the other. His final testimonies are, " But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and *whoremongers*, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death " (Rev. xxi. 8). " For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and *whoremongers*, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie " (Rev. xxii. 15). What a miserable set to spend eternity with in darkness and distance from God ! Wretched is the man who is in this list,—happy he who is not of it !

How good is it for us to notice that Joseph, in the presence of the most terrible temptation, resists and escapes. What is the secret of his being kept ? He says, " How can I sin against God ? " His eye is upon God. He lives before God. Happy man ! He has the sense before God of what is right and wrong, and that every sin, whether " against his own body " (see 1 Cor. vi. 18) or not, is a sin against God. " How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? " is a splendid rejoinder. It bespoke a godly state of mind, a tender conscience. Blessed man ! " Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him " (James i. 12).

But to continue Joseph's history. His tender con-

science, and resisting of temptation brought him into trouble. His master's wife told a lie to cover her own sin. Naturally Potiphar was angry, and I am not surprised that Joseph was thrust into prison. What is the outcome? All works out for Joseph's blessing, and for the carrying out of the purposes of God. In chapter xl. he falls in with two prisoners, who had dreamed dreams. The one had been the chief baker, and the other chief butler to Pharaoh; and each of these men had their respective dreams, which I need not relate. They tell Joseph their dreams, and he says to the chief butler, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But *think on me* when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and *make mention of me* unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon" (xl. 12-15).

Further on in the same chapter we read, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but *forgot him*" (ver. 23). How like the history of Jesus is all this. He has blessed and benefited us, and we have forgotten Him. My friends, you have forgotten Jesus, have you not? How many a man, if he be honest, would confess, I have forgotten Jesus. But you may say, What has Jesus done? Joseph gave the chief butler the comfort of knowing that instead of his head being taken off for his fault, he was

to be restored ; and, in face of our guilt as sinners, what has Jesus done for us? He has come into this world unasked, and really not wanted ; He has died on the cross—He, the sinless one, has borne our sins, and having completed the work of redemption, God has set Him down now at His own right hand in glory. From glory now His voice comes down, saying to us, “ But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me.” What a touching word is this to each believer in Him ! Each such can say, I know it is well with me, I know I am saved, I know I am a forgiven and pardoned man through Christ, I know I possess eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it not well indeed with all who can so speak ? To all such His voice appeals. “ Show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me.” To whom, Lord ? my heart replies, and I can hear Him say, “ To the young men in Edinburgh, who do not know Me.”

I would fain then to-night make mention of Him to all you dear young men who do not know Him, who neither love nor care for Him. Let me again tell you that Jesus is the exalted, and ever-living Saviour. He has saved me, and He can save you to-night, and you can then go out and tell the tale of His love and saving grace to others likewise. It is a happy thing to go out and tell others of Jesus. To the loving heart very touching are these words, “ Think on me when it shall be well with thee.” Is it not well with the Christian ? Yes. Is it not well with the saved ? Ah, yes ! Is it not well with the converted man ? It is. Is it well with the unsaved ? No. Is it well with the godless man ? It is not. Young man, walking and hurrying

in sins—going on to judgment—is it well with thee? Nay, it is far from well with thy soul. Unconverted one, it is ill—terribly ill—with thy soul. Listen to-night, for, mark, you will have to bow to Jesus yet.

In the 41st chapter of our book we find that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, dreams two dreams, and, being greatly exercised to find out their meaning, he turns to his own wise men and astrologers. In the 8th verse we read: "And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh" (chap. xli. 8). No, my friends, the world can give you no information really about the ways of God, or His purposes. If you are to learn the thoughts of God, you must go to the people of God, and the Word of God. This point is beautifully illustrated in Joseph's history. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day." A good thing for a man to acknowledge. He had forgotten Joseph, but now his conscience wakes up. "Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and he put me in ward, in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us *a young man*, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged" (vers. 10-13).

It is nice to have, as companion, even though it be in prison, a young man who can expound to his neighbours the thoughts of God. I wish you were such a young man. Would you not like to be a young man who could expound the thoughts of God? You might be such if only you were converted, and devoted to Christ. "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (vers. 14-16).

Thereafter Pharaoh tells this Hebrew youth his dreams, and Joseph, having the mind of God, simply unfolds them. There were first to be seven years of marvellous plenty in the land, and then these were to be followed by seven years of unparalleled famine. As the result of this Joseph says, "The plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the

cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine" (vers. 31-36). Joseph's counsel is very simple. During the years of plenty lay up for the future. Ah! prepare for the future, that is the point.

Young man, prepare for the future. That is the lesson I get from Joseph. Have you provided for the future? I do not mean for the things of this life. Mark you, you cannot be sure of a future in this life. Most men that one sees are very busy and earnest in their desire to get on in this world: would that they were as earnest about eternal things. So keen are they for time that eternity is utterly neglected. I have heard of one who was a tremendous man for business, and was very successful. He got on amazingly. One morning a friend came in and said, "Have you heard of the sad death of Mr Brown?" "Brown dead!" he replied, "Brown dead, why I have not time to die, I am far too busy." He stooped forward to tie his bootlace, and fell dead on the floor. Young man, you may be the next. Are you ready? Are you prepared? Are you converted? Have you turned to the Lord yet? Ah! friend, "prepare to meet thy God." Joseph was wise. He said in effect to Pharaoh, Make provision for the future. Now I do not want you to be thinking of the things of this world. I want you to be ready for eternity. I want you to be ready for that moment of unparalleled importance in your history, when you have to pass out of this world. What is death to the Christian? It is to pass into glory. But what is death to the sinner? What is it? You may say, I know not. I

know some people say you cannot know, but I believe you can know, for God has revealed the future of the lost soul in His Word. To all such is reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13); "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. i. 9); for they will taste "the second death, the lake of fire," since "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 14, 15). Awful future!

Joseph having interpreted the dreams, and advised what should be done for the future, Pharaoh sees the wisdom of the scheme, and says, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled : only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt" (vers. 39-41). This is very noteworthy! The man who through grace resisted temptation, and got into prison as the result of it, because he feared to sin against God, is exalted over all the land of Egypt. Temptation resisted always leads to triumph. Pharaoh now changes Joseph's name, and calls him "Zaphnath-paaneah," which in the Coptic signifies "a revealer of secrets," but in the Hebrew means "saviour of the world." Such was Joseph in his day for Egypt, and that is exactly what Jesus is now. He reveals to you all the secrets of your life and heart, and He is the Saviour of the world. In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel Jesus reveals the heart of the woman who was living in sin, as He says to her, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for

thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," *i.e.*, she was living in open sin. He knows all about your life too, my friends. She goes away and says to the Samaritans, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Many came out, and "believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did;" and afterwards said to her, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD" (John iv. 39-42). Here is the true Zaphnath-paaneah. Jesus is the revealer of the secrets of the heart, but more than that, He is the true and only Saviour. You must have to do with Him. I know you do not want Him; perhaps even have hated Him, and blasphemed His blessed name, but, spite of that, you must meet Him, and you had better do it now in the day of grace, and not wait for the day of famine.

What Pharaoh does here for Joseph is a very striking picture of what will yet be enacted in regard to the Lord Jesus. We read that he "took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, BOW THE KNEE: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt" (vers. 42, 43). I think I see the trumpeters going before him, and hear them crying, "Bow the knee." Bow the knee to Joseph, the exalted Hebrew slave! Pharaoh had said it, and *bow the people must*. Sinner! God now bids you bow the knee; bow your heart to Christ. Bow you must; bow you

shall. You may reply, Bow I won't ! Yes, you will—for God has said, " I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear " (Isa. xlv. 23). That, you say, refers to God in His Godhead glory. Quite true ; but, when the Holy Ghost quotes it in the New Testament, I find it applied to the Lord Jesus Christ as the exalted man. Listen, " Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED him, and given him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of things in heaven (angels), and things in earth (men), and things under the earth (demons) ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Phil. ii. 6-11). What a testimony to His Deity ! That which He could claim as God shall be rendered to Him as Man—the once tempted, but now triumphant Man. Angels, men, and demons—all must bow to Jesus. Mark it well ! No man is exempt. Every one at the name of Jesus shall bow the knee. Angels delight to own Him. Many young men in this hall to-night rejoice to own Him. I know a few by headmark here who confide in, and delight to own Him. Join their ranks ! Is it not a joy to confess Him ? Yes, indeed, it is a joy to confess that there is no name so sweet as the name of Jesus.

"Bow the knee" was the general order given by Pharaoh. How many a proud Egyptian noble said, "Not I. I bow to Joseph the exalted slave? Never, never!" I think I see the trumpeter as he went forth and made the proclamation, by royal command, and I see many a proud Egyptian rear his head, and say, "Bow to Joseph! Never, never as long as I live!" And you won't bow to Jesus? You don't mean to bow to Christ? You don't mean to believe in Jesus? Stop a bit. The end of the chapter tells us that there were seven years of plenty, and then came seven years of famine. Let us see what took place then. "And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, GO UNTO JOSEPH; *what he saith to you do*" (ver. 55). I think that is charming. I think I can see them all ignoring Joseph, and going to Pharaoh, just as men now ignore Jesus, yet think they may go to God direct. "GO TO JOSEPH," said Pharaoh, and that is what God is saying to you from glory—"GO TO JESUS. Bow to Jesus." You must bow. He is given a name above every name, and God has declared that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

Now if you will take the trouble, when you go home, to read the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis, you will find four points, which I shall only indicate. There we read that when there was "no bread in all the land," that the people "fainted by reason of the famine," and had to go to Joseph to buy corn. Hence, first "Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt" (ver. 14); secondly, he "fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year" (ver. 17);

thirdly, he "bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh" (ver. 20); and lastly, he says, "I have bought *you* this day" (ver. 23). Thus you see *the money* fell into Joseph's coffers, *the cattle* became his, *the lands* fell into his hand, and lastly *the people* themselves are acquired by Joseph for Pharaoh. There is nothing brings a man down like hunger. Neither a man's pride nor his parentage can fill him in the day of hunger and need. The prodigal was fain to fill his belly with the husks the swine did eat, but could not do it. Nothing brings a man down like soul-hunger, and it is a great thing when the soul-hunger becomes commanding, when a man feels that he is a sinner, and has need of Christ, and must have Christ. Pharaoh sent the needy of his day to Joseph. They had to admit his importance, and from him they got what met their need, while Joseph acquired everything for his master.

Now I pray you not to forget the solemn yet blessed fact that the Lord Jesus is Lord of all. I admit He is forgotten, and that His claims are not recognised, but He will soon come again in glory, and His rights will be ceded by man, and established by God. What an awful day it will be when Christ takes the world in hand. It is better to own Him in the day of His absence than meet Him in the day of His wrath. You may know Him by faith now. Perhaps you have said I will never confess His name, I will not be converted, I won't yield my heart to Him. Even that sin He will forgive, and I hope you will repent, and be converted this very night. You could not do better. Be like a young man I knew. I was preaching in a good-sized town in Scotland

many years ago. In the house where I was staying this young man lived with his parents, who were decided Christians. This youth was most resolute in the determination that he would not be converted. For long he would not come to the meetings, and would not yield his heart to Jesus. He heard of the conversion of his brother and sisters, but he was still resolute. One night, to my surprise and joy, I saw my young friend for the first time enter the hall, and take a seat just inside the door, as if he desired that nobody should see him, and know he was there. When we got home to his father's house he made not a single remark to me, and I made none either. I had to leave at six A.M. next day to come into my work in Edinburgh. His sisters used to rise and give me breakfast, but that morning, to our amazement, in walked Willie. His sisters looked surprised to see him, and more so, when, as I bade "Good-bye" to the girls, Willie said, "If you will allow me, doctor, I will carry your bag to the station." I was delighted, and thanked him. As I got into the train, and was saying "Good-bye," I said, "I suppose the carrying of that bag means this, Willie, that from this day forth you are to be on the Lord's side?" "That is exactly what I mean," he replied. "I wanted to confess that I was converted to God in that meeting last night." He did not live very long after that, and it was a good thing that he was turned to the Lord then.

I would like to meet you, young man, to-morrow morning, and hear you make the same confession, "I was converted to God in the Operetta House last night. I made up my mind to become a Christian." There was never a wiser resolution. Nothing can be

more blessed, more bright, or precious than to become a Christian. Why not turn to Jesus now? Believe in Him now.

But you may ask, In order to become a Christian, what have I to do? You will have to do as Joseph's brethren did, and their history is most instructive. They had hated Joseph, sold him for money, and told lies about him, but when the famine came they were compelled to go to him for corn. They got into Joseph's presence. He knows them, but they do not know him. You may say, I don't know Jesus; I know nothing about Him, but I am anxious about my sins. All true, but Christ knows you. I don't love Jesus. But Jesus loves you. I have done nothing for the Lord, say you. But He has done much for you, for He died for you.

The way which Joseph takes to wake up the consciences of his brethren is very interesting. He "made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them, saying, Whence came ye? . . . By the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies" (xlii. 7, 20). The effect was electric. "They said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (ver. 21). Their consciences were reached, and it is a good thing when the conscience gets reached. God's avenue to the heart is ever by the conscience.

They have to go for corn a second time, and they "carry down the man a present" (xliii. 11). And then you read, "The men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house" (ver. 18). Fear begins to work in man's heart when he is getting near

to Christ—into God's presence. Then "they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon" (ver. 25). Do you think you can bring a present to Christ in order to win pardon? No, no, you have to come to Him as you are—a poor sinner in your sins. And what then? You will find Him full of grace. True, you may fall to the ground, as Judah and his brethren did, saying, "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (xliv. 16). You cannot clear yourself, so you had better just confess your sins to the Lord frankly. Conscience had better be heeded ere it be too late. When man thinks about eternal things his conscience always works.

We are sinners, and we must feel our sins, and own them too. It is a grand day when a man owns his sins before God. God had found out their iniquity. He has found out your iniquity, and He has found out my iniquity, but I will tell you something more. He has pardoned me and forgiven me. It is a blessed thing to be able to say with the Psalmist, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. *I acknowledge my sin* unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, *I will confess my transgressions* unto the Lord; and *thou forgavest* the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. xxxii. 1-5). The moment you draw near in the acknowledgment of your sin the Lord Himself meets you. The first word He said

to an anxious soul was, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace" (Luke vii. 48-50). Grace and love, forgiveness and blessing, are the portion of the soul that turns to Him. When Joseph has got his brethren in his house, and he sees that they are troubled, he says, "Come near to me, I pray you ; and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt" (xlv. 4). He reveals himself as the Joseph whom they had made away with, but who was now exalted. "I am your brother." What a touching revelation ! You cannot live without me, you cannot subsist without me, but I will be your saviour, he goes on to say.

As soon as the ploughshare of conviction has done its work in the conscience, God delights to relieve and discharge the sin-burdened soul. So is it here, as Joseph adds, "I am your brother, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them ; and after that his brethren talked with him" (vers. 5-15). It is a great thing when a man has a deep sense of his sin, and owns it. When he thus comes into the presence of God, He forgives and blots out the sins on the ground of Christ's finished work for the sinner.

I pray you to learn from Joseph's history that the only way to rightly pass through this scene is by having a sense of what is sin against God, and then knowing your own sin, to turn to the true Joseph and let Him save you. Turn to Him for pardon, forgiveness, and blessing. Do not be ashamed to own the

Lord, nor to confess Him. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 9, 10). God's salvation is very simple. You turn to the Saviour who died for you, with the acknowledgment of your sin and guilt, you bow your heart to Him, and you receive blessing from Him. He says, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). God give you grace to-night to receive Christ as your own blessed Saviour and then to confess Him boldly.

MOSES; OR, REFUSING AND CHOOSING

HEB. xi. 24-28.

Lecture V.

THERE are three points in Moses' history recorded by God's Spirit in this passage. The history of Moses is a very interesting and instructive one; and all of you who are conversant with Old Testament Scripture will remember that his life, and what was connected therewith, occupies a very large portion of the Pentateuch, of which also he was the undoubted writer. From Exodus to the end of Deuteronomy we have a very large account of what took place in his life, and of the results of his ministry. The Spirit of God, in the verses I have read, summarises the salient points of this remarkable man's life under three heads—(1) the moment when he turned right round to God; (2) the moment when he absolutely broke with the world; and (3) the memorable occasion when he put between himself and God the sprinkled blood, the blood of atonement, which made his own salvation a downright certainty.

Now, I wonder how many of you in this hall to-night have passed through an experience like that of Moses. Probably most of you are somewhat younger than he was when he made his remarkable choice. There are two striking things to be noted in verse 24: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *choosing*

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." How old was he when, as the Holy Ghost says here, "he was come to years"? We are told exactly how old he was in the seventh chapter of the Acts, where the Spirit of God, by the mouth of Stephen, says, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel" (Acts vii. 22). Perhaps you would not call a man of forty young; but he was not old, when the total age of the man is taken into consideration, "for Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deut. xxxiv. 7); so that at forty he would be, so to speak, quite in the days of his youth. I fully admit that he was not a giddy man of the moment, nor as frivolous as most of us were at twenty or twenty-five. I think he had come to the time of life when he had his head screwed on rightly, if you understand me. He had a real sense of what things were. He was forty years of age,—the number in Scripture of probation, or perfect testing,—and, mark you! when this man turned to God, he was no novice as to the world and its unsatisfactory pleasures. When Moses turned right round to God,—when he turned his back on the world,—on the idolatry of Egypt, and upon the brightest prospect that mortal man on earth ever had,—he was a man who knew exactly how to appraise things at their full and true value.

At forty years of age, what was Moses' position? It was a very remarkable one. He was the child of

Hebrew parents, and owing to the cruel injunction of the king, that all the male children should be destroyed, he should have perished in infancy by being flung into the river. This injunction his parents had disobeyed "by faith," and the child was put by his mother in a cradle, and laid in the flags by the river's side. Pharaoh's daughter, as she went to bathe in the river, saw this ark or cradle, and had it brought to her. When the ark was opened, "the babe wept," and her womanly heart was touched, and she adopted the child. Moses' own sister then came forward, and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she should fetch a nurse. She commanded her to do so, and Moses' own mother was brought. "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," the astonished mother hears, but from that time Pharaoh's daughter claimed the child, "and he became her son" (Exod. ii. 1-10). She raised him from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to manhood, as being her own son ; and what was the result ? When Moses came to be forty years of age, he was within direct touch of the throne of Egypt, and with every prospect of ascending it. Pharaoh had no son, and Pharaoh's daughter had no children, and, in the event of her death, there was no doubt that her adopted son would have ascended the throne of Egypt, and would have been the monarch of the ruling nation in the world at that moment.

Moreover, Moses was evidently an exceedingly clever man. He was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and the Egyptians were not fools. It would puzzle our builders to do what they did—to put up the Pyramids, and rear the mighty structures that were

common enough in the days of Moses. There was a good deal of wisdom current. The world was not quite such a baby in those days as men in their conceit now-a-days are wont to think it was. There was a great deal more wisdom in those days than we are wont to credit the world with ; and "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He was a scientific, accomplished, and intellectual man ; but more than that, "he was mighty in words and in deeds." As a speaker, an orator, who could address his fellows,—spite of his own humble estimate of himself (Exod. iv. 10),—he was clearly at the top of the tree. In the forum or the fight, in the amphitheatre or the battlefield, he could meet with any man who came against him. He was mighty "in deeds" as well as "in words." He was an all-round accomplished man of the world, who had few, if any, equals—a man that men could be proud of. That man had the ball at his foot. He had the world before him. He was not only the king's favourite, and the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, but was within touch of the throne ; and as a man, he was evidently what you may call the world's man, —a notable man among men, from whom they expected much.

All of a sudden Moses flings all up ; all of a sudden he turns his back upon what had hitherto claimed him, charmed him, and allured him. What was the reason ? Well, Scripture says, "By *faith* Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." And what was this wonderful energy that wrought in his soul this change ? It was faith. Faith is the principle

that links the soul with God. It is that mighty principle that sees beyond the things of time, and looks right into eternity. The fact was this,—in some way or other—for the producing circumstances are not told us,—the Spirit of God had wrought in that man's heart, and he looked through time into eternity.

Oh! would to God that you too would take a deep long look right into eternity! for although you are here to-day, you cannot tell how soon you will be in it. It lies before you, just as Moses knew it lay before him; and he looked right into eternity, and he measured in the balances of the sanctuary what he had for time, and what lay before him in eternity. By grace he was able to do this remarkable act,—he gave up the present, in view of the future. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *choosing rather* to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Refusing and choosing! Every man must do the same. Every one of you must refuse, and you must choose. Either you refuse the world and choose Christ, or you refuse Christ and choose the world. I quite admit that at that moment the present realities of the Gospel, in all their sweetness and fulness, had not come out as they have to us now; but Moses saw enough to make him see and say this: “There is something infinitely better than what I have just now; I will go in for it.” But what about your position, Moses? What about your place in the court and the palace? “These things are hindrances in my road, and I will cede them,” is his reply.

I have no doubt that the devil suggested to him,

Why don't you keep the place that providence has placed you in? Undoubtedly providence had placed him in that position. But remember providence is one thing, and faith is another. While no doubt the providence of God had placed him in a lofty position, he was part and parcel with those who were not God's people. He saw that the thing of the utmost importance was to be of, and to be identified with, those who were God's people. There are some people in this world who belong to God. Do you belong to Him? Then distinctly understand this: If a man does not belong to God, Satan claims that man. People do not like that doctrine; they think it very strange. You are not your own, man! Oh! no. "The god of this world" claims you, holds you, and binds you, if you do not belong to God. Moses felt it and knew it, and he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He said: "Let me be among God's people; I had rather have affliction with God's people, than have the favour and fawning of the world, and all that the children of the world can lay at my feet." He was wise.

But possibly you may say to me, What did he give it up for? I grant you he gave up an earthly court and crown, and the company of earthly courtiers, but Scripture tells us "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." I wonder if you ever thought of the company that Moses got into afterwards! I do not know whether you ever thought of it, but it is worthy of notice. In the gospels we read there was a certain occasion when the blessed Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured. Peter, James, and John saw the Lord transfigured:—"And, behold, there talked with

him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 30, 31). Ah! Moses has his recompense there. He is in the company, not only of the people of God, but of the Son of God! I want you, my friends, to follow his steps. I want everybody here this evening, who has not yet turned to the Lord Jesus, to do, in principle, what Moses did. It comes to this,—a man has to refuse and to choose.

When I was converted to God myself, what did I do? I refused, and I chose. You may say to me, How did it come about? I will tell you. I was going to be a lawyer, not a doctor, and I had gone up from the south of Devon to London to go on with my legal studies, and I got into a meeting where a servant of God was preaching. That is thirty-three years ago. It was on the 16th December 1860. The dear servant of God who was preaching that evening brought out very simply the importance and the blessedness of being a Christian. Every seat in the hall was filled, and I stood in the aisle the whole of that evening. As the preacher—who has now gone to glory—went on, I said to myself, That man is right; he is right, and I am wrong. But there was more than that, I got the sense that that man knew God, and I did not—that man was saved, and I was not—that he was going to glory, while I was going to hell—that he was going to be the companion of Christ, and I knew I was going to be the companion of the devil perfectly well. You ask, Were you a terribly gross sinner? I was exactly like you, an unconverted young man—a man full of the world. I admit that

at that time there was not a pleasure of the world that I had not dipped into. I tasted of "the pleasures of sin," but they never satisfied me, and that night I was a convicted man—an awakened man. I found that I was on the wrong road altogether—that I was all wrong. I was pulled up. God pull you up, my young friend. God arrested me. God arrest you!

The preacher at the end invited anybody who would like to have a conversation with him to wait behind, and I waited. Ten years before I had seen the preacher. Curious are the links in the chain of God's grace to an unconverted soul. This servant of His had come down to Devonshire to preach, and stopped in my father's house. He wanted to go to a place five miles away to see a friend, and my father let me drive him. When we got home he said to me, "This has been a beautiful drive, and here is a little remembrance of it," and he handed me a mother-of-pearl-handled knife with four blades. Now a four-bladed knife is usually thought a great deal of by a lad of ten, and I prized it accordingly.

As I entered the door of the hall that night in London, and heard who was to preach, I felt I had a certain link with the speaker—beloved C. S. I listened with real interest to his solemn, searching address on Solomon building the temple,—since published under the title of "Great Stones and Costly,"—and I thought I would like to resume my friendship with himself.

After a few words with him, he introduced me to a young man of about my own age, who simply asked me, "Are you a Christian?" "No, sir," I answered, "I am not a Christian." "Oh, you are not a Chris-

tian ! How is that ? ” I said, “ I don’t know, but I am not one.” “ Don’t you want to be one ? ” “ Yes, I should like to be one.” “ Well, what have you to do to become one ? ” “ I suppose I have only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” “ Yes, and do you believe in Him ? ” “ I do ; we all believe in England.” “ Yes, but tell me, what do you believe ? ” Well, I confess I was struck with that question when he put it. I had been brought up in a Christian family. I had a Christian father and mother, a converted brother, and several Christian sisters, but I was not a Christian myself. I never was more puzzled than when he put that question, “ What do you believe ? ” After a pause, I said, “ I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” “ And to save you ? ” “ Well, I hope so, among the rest.” “ Do you believe in Him ? ” “ I do.” “ And are you saved ? ” “ Oh, no, I don’t feel saved ; and I can’t expect to be saved until I feel I am saved.” My young friend said, “ Stop, you think you really need saving ? You know you are a sinner ? ” “ I know it, and, what is more, I’d give the world to be a Christian.” “ But you have nothing to give, you have only to receive,” and then he put the Gospel very simply to me. I was on the verge of believing the Gospel, and accepting God’s way of salvation, when an old acquaintance stepped up, and whispered in my ear, “ Remember you have to sing at a concert in Devonshire (I used to sing at concerts, chiefly comic songs) in Christmas week, and you have many other similar engagements that week. Now no man can serve two masters. You could not be a Christian and fulfil all your worldly engagements. You had better put off being a Christian for a fort-

night, and then when you come back to London you can believe the Gospel and be a Christian." On went this subtle yet damnable temptation, for it was the devil who whispered, "No man can serve two masters;" and I recollect I said at the time, "That is true, I have served you too long. You are a bad master, and I will serve you no more." And, thank God! I made up my mind then and there. The scripture which the devil quoted to hinder me really helped me to decide for Christ.

"And you do believe in Jesus?" said the young man who was conversing with me. "I do believe." "And what do you believe?" he asked again. "I believe that Christ died to save me." "And do you think the Lord is willing to save you?" "Yes, I think He is." "And has He saved you?" "Ah, no! I am not saved yet; I don't feel saved." I was waiting for experience. All of a sudden he said: "I see where you are; you are just in the position of the man of whom the apostle James says, 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble'" (Jas. ii. 19). Who does not believe that there is a God? Every young man in this hall does so. "Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." That verse pierced me through. I saw in a moment the ground I was on, and the company I was in; and I am not ashamed to confess, in the face of you all to-night, that when I saw my company I fled. Fled! To whom? To the Saviour! I saw where I was. I saw I was practically the companion of those who, while they believe there is one God, tremble under the sense of His judgment, knowing that they are eternally

lost. "The devils also believe, and tremble" pierced my conscience to the uttermost. They and I were on common ground. The young Scotchman who was speaking with me said, "There is this difference between you and them ; there is no mercy for them ; they are beyond it. There is mercy for you, and God grant that you may taste it." "What must I do to be saved?" burst from my lips. "You have only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I thought, Can I believe that Jesus died for me? Yes, I do believe, and, thank God ! I made up my mind for the Lord on that spot,—found Him as my Saviour, received pardon and peace on the spot, was filled with joy, and have never for one moment repented my choice.

You do the same to-night, I implore you. I chose Christ, and I refused the world, with the same breath. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather,"—and you must choose. Make your choice to-night. Would you not rather choose Jesus Christ, and "suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and then suffer their penalty for ever? Moses saw where he was. He saw he was going down with the tide. Are you going down with the tide, or are you not? Can you tell me the difference between a dead fish and a living one, in the water? I think most of you could. A dead fish is easily enough known. It goes with the stream, but you generally find the living fish with its nose up the stream. Moses knew he was going with the stream, and every unconverted man is going on with the stream,—going on with "the pleasures of sin." They are only for a season, however. I do not

deny that there is pleasure in sin, for God says there is pleasure in sin ; but, stop ! there are penalties connected with sin, which all who go in for the pleasures of sin are exposed to. The pleasures of sin are only for a season ; they do not really satisfy. No young man in this hall who is unconverted is really satisfied.

Just settle down for five minutes and think, in the midst of your folly, and giddiness, and godlessness,—think for five minutes, and you will become unhappy. Your conscience will act. Three months before I was converted I was in a ballroom, and in the middle of a waltz with a young lady we paused before a chiffoniere where there were some lovely flowers. “Are not these flowers lovely ?” she said. “Yes, they are beautiful,” I replied, “but they are very like us.” “What do you mean ?” she asked. “They are cut, they will be withered and dead to-morrow.” I had a conscience, you see. “Oh ! what *do* you mean ?” said she, perfectly alarmed. “Never mind,” I answered, and we got into the whirl of the waltz once more. But the remark stuck to her conscience ; she saw death was ahead of her. Death and damnation were before me, and I knew it full well. I knew that death and judgment and hell lay before me. I am thankful to say that my remark was used by the Spirit of God, and was like seed dropped into good ground. It rankled so in her conscience, that she had no soul-rest till she came to Jesus. When God brought me to Himself, and I was preaching a few months afterwards in the town where she lived, she came to hear me preach, found Christ as her Saviour, and then told me how she was awakened in the ballroom.

Ah, my friends, it is a great thing to have Christ.

It is a wonderful thing to have Christ—a wonderful thing to be saved. Have your fill of pleasure here, take all that the world can give you, and what then? You pass into eternity. You have no lease of life. You may have a lease of your house, of your shop, or of your warehouse, but you have no lease of your life. That life is often short. The call to eternity is often sudden. Since I spoke to you in this hall last Lord's Day evening, a fine young man, the son of one of my oldest friends in this town, has been suddenly called away. He was out riding, his horse shied, and he struck his brow against an overhanging branch of a tree. He fell to the ground insensible, and within four and twenty hours passed into eternity. Tell me, if within the same space of time you were to pass into eternity, where would you spend it? Don't shirk the query. Have you eternal life? Are you forgiven? Do you know that living Saviour, who died on Calvary's tree?

By faith Moses refused that which was unsatisfactory. By faith he made his choice to keep company with the children of God. By faith he laid hold on that which was revealed to his soul—the things of God and of eternity. He was not ashamed to be found among God's people. Possibly some of you might feel ashamed to be called a Christian. Nay, you need not. Suppose you do suffer affliction with the people of God, rejoice therein. The early disciples "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts v. 41). The man who suffers for Christ has no need to be ashamed. There is shame enough coming to the impenitent and eternally lost sinner. He gets the pleasures of sin in

time, and the pains, penalties, and consequences of sin in eternity. Sin is a terrible thing. The doing of our own will is a terrible thing. It sundered man from God to begin with, and it sunders man from God for eternity. The pleasures of sin carry most fearful penalties, and the man who chooses the pleasures of sin in preference to God's pleasures is not wise. The Psalmist truly said, "In thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). And who may have them ? You may have them this night, if through grace you are led to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next thing we read about Moses here is, that he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." I have no doubt Moses got well laughed at, when he made up his mind to come out on God's side and identify himself with God's people. You must not forget what they were. They were slaves under Pharaoh. When Moses' mind was fully made up, I have no doubt his old comrades laughed at him, despised him, and jeered at him, and said, What a fool that Moses is ! Moses was no fool. Folly is in the pathway of the man who enters eternity regardless of the need of the soul. Moses might have been called all sorts of names. But it does not do a man much harm to be called names. Never mind if the men who have been your companions call you a "blue light," a "salvationist," or a "revivalist." Never you mind, my friend, if you are the Lord's man, though your comrades in the class-room, the counting-house, or the workshop, make sport of you. The Christian man has got the best of it all along the line—right through

time and into eternity. He has God for his Father, Christ for his Saviour, the Holy Ghost for his Comforter, the Bible for his guide, and the children of God for his companions. Happy man! blessed man! What is it he loses? He loses his sins; and the loss of being judged for your sins is not one to be mourned.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” was a fine working principle. I have no doubt Moses, ere he took that step, put into one scale pan of the balance what he had for time in connection with the idolatry of Egypt, and into the other scale he put the reproach of Christ. He weighed the treasures of the world against “the reproach of Christ,” and was then happily found “esteeming the reproach of Christ *greater riches* than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” He looked into the future. I pray you, look into the future. Think what eternity is. Have you ever really pondered what eternity is? It is a terrible word for an unsaved man. You cannot picture it. You cannot measure it. If it were possible that a bird should fly from this earth to the nearest fixed star, and his flight be as rapid as light, it would take thousands of years. Were his duty to convey this earth thither, grain by grain, the time occupied by journeys to and fro, till all the earth had been so carried to yonder fixed star, would be illimitable and utterly uncountable. But when that work has been done eternity is only just begun. Your condition and fixed state, as a sinner without God, in that which the Scripture speaks of as “the lake of fire,” where “the

worm dieth not," is then only beginning. Oh! I pray you think of it.

But I hear you say, I don't believe in hell. My friend, your not believing in it does not reduce it to nothingness. Men would have us believe now-a-days that it is an idle fable; but that is impossible. The fact that Christ died, suffering "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," and that the gates of glory might be opened to us, is a conclusive proof of the eternal realities of the scene in which the unregenerate man must suffer. Were there nothing to escape, why did Jesus voluntarily endure the forsaking of God on the cross? It is written that He "*suffered* for sins *once*, the *just* for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God"; and the sufferings of the Saviour are to me an absolutely conclusive proof of the inevitable sufferings of the sinner who goes into eternity in his sins.

The man who now passes into eternity in an unsaved, unconverted, unforgiven, unbelieving state, goes into it with his eyes open, for God has spoken plainly. The light you have is infinitely more than that which Moses had, but he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." "The world is for time," he says, "I want something for eternity. The world is fleeting and passing; I want something abiding and eternal. This world is passing! give me that which will abide for ever—the companionship of the people of God in time, and of God Himself for ever." From the ninth of Luke we have seen that his reward was glory; for there you find Moses in glory with Christ. I will never meet you in hell, and Moses will never meet you there; and if his voice could be heard from heaven to-night it would say: "Young man, you had

better follow my pathway. People thought me a fool in my earthly pathway, but see where I am now ; I am in glory with Christ." He " had respect unto the recompense of the reward," and it was indeed great.

But there was great energy in Moses' faith, for we read, " By faith he *forsook Egypt*, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." What cheered him, kept him going ? what carried him on ? " He endured as seeing him who is invisible." He had his eye on God. He knew God. The Christian knows God. The Christian young man knows God as his Father, and the Son of God as his Saviour. He knows his sins are forgiven. " He endures as seeing him who is invisible." Faith sees right into the future. Faith knows what is coming. I can tell you nothing about time, but as to eternity all is as clear as noon-day light. The believer in Jesus has eternal life. The sinner who trusts in Jesus knows his sins are forgiven. " For to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins " (Acts x. 43).

There is a third point of immense importance stated about Moses in the scripture before us. " Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." Do you understand that ? It was the sprinkling of the blood of the passover lamb on the lintel and two sideposts of the door ere the Israelites could come out of Egypt. Moses had made up his mind at that time to turn his back on the king of Egypt, the prince of the world, and start for heaven and glory. But God had said that, in order to the

deliverance of the people, the blood of redemption, the blood of the lamb of substitution, must be seen by Him on the lintels. The Holy Ghost records about Moses here that in order to secure his redemption, and in order to his being sheltered from the righteous judgment of God, he put between his soul and God the blood of atonement, the blood of the slain lamb. You must imitate Moses if you want salvation. You can have it to-night, if in faith you put between your guilty soul and God the blood of Jesus. Wonderful is the truth that the Son of God—the sinless, blessed Son of Man—died for you ; and if you believe in Him, and rest your soul on the blessed truth of His death and resurrection, your eternal salvation is assured. “By faith Moses kept the passover and the *sprinkling* of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.”

Now, why, I should like to ask, is the sprinkling spoken of here? Because belief in the mere fact that Christ died will not save me. I must appropriate it, and must make it my own, and that is what faith does ; it sprinkles the blood. There is many a man to-day who believes that Jesus died, but who has not got His blood applied to his own soul. That is like the man in Egypt who had slain the lamb, and put the blood in the basin, but had not put the blood on the lintel of his door. The *shed blood* is the fact that Jesus died ; the blood *sprinkled* indicates that I believe *He died for me* ; I have appropriated it for my own need. There is no real application of the truth to the soul till this point is reached. There must be a personal application of

the truth. God's salvation is individual. It goes not by families, kirks, or nations. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." And why? Because you can only get in one at a time. It is individual. You must have it for yourself; you must get it for yourself. Thank God, I have got it! Will you not receive Christ to-night? You could not do better than follow in Moses' path—First, Decide for Christ; second, turn your back on the world; and third, get under the shelter of the blood of Jesus. Faith does all three. Have you faith?

JONATHAN; OR, A GOOD START.

I SAM. xvii., xviii. 1-4.

Lecture VI.

I CALL the action of Jonathan here a fine start. You have a picture here of the way in which a man soundly converted to Christ starts,—there is complete surrender. The Old Testament is full of pictures. David is a type of Christ—Jonathan of the delivered sinner. We have a lovely picture of that which takes place when the soul learns what deliverance is, and when the heart is attracted to and bound to a deliverer. It is an immense thing to have the heart completely surrendered to the One who has blessed you and delivered you ; and that is what I find here. Jonathan is delivered absolutely by David, and he makes a complete and full surrender of himself. All that he is and has he surrenders absolutely to David. It is a simple figure of what takes place in the soul and in the heart when we find Christ. Only learn the love of Jesus, who He is, and what He has done, and there will be in your case a full surrender of your heart to Him.

What I have read in chapter xvii. is very interesting. It opens with the hosts of Philistia and those of Israel gathered together in battle array against each other. The valley of Elah lay between them. It appears that the Philistines had a champion,—Goliath of Gath, “a man of war from his youth,”—whose

height was six cubits and a span, or about ten feet. A good tall man that! This man had "an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of his coat was five thousand shekels of brass. . . . And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and one bearing a shield went before him" (vers. 4-7). In plain language, the leader of the hosts of Philistia, to man's eye, was invulnerable. No man dared to meet him in conflict, or respond to his challenge. "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? *Choose you a man for you*, and let him come down to me." That was a challenge,—a fair, bold, downright challenge. "Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day: *give me a man that we may fight together.*" I don't think there is a man in this hall would care to measure arms with a ten-footer; and so was it in Jonathan's day, for "when Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (vers. 8-10). Discretion is generally the better part of valour, and it was so in this case. No one responded to the challenge, as morning and evening he presented himself. The test was very complete, for "the Philistine drew near every morning and evening, and presented himself *forty days.*" Every morning and

evening he stood between the two hosts, and said, "Give me a man," and looks all round for him. But no one ventured into single conflict with him. No one would come. They were wise ; I commend their wisdom. They knew perfectly well it only meant certain death,—absolute defeat for them,—and they stood in the ranks.

Do you say, What cowards? You and I would have done just the same, I expect. That is the real truth. They knew it was no use. It was certain death for them to face the giant. With his enormous weapons, and corresponding strength to wield them, opposition only meant certain defeat. "They were sore afraid,"—and I don't call them a pack of cowards. I think the men were wise. They feared to put their lives in jeopardy to no purpose ; and it would be better for you if you feared the devil more than you do.

Now, my friends, do you think nobody is challenging you now-a-days after this sort? Yes. Goliath, as the enemy of the Lord's people, is but the figure of the power of Satan ; and Satan is more than a match for you or me. Satan is crafty, as well as powerful. The devil knows full well how to get over a man. I know perfectly well that people say, I don't believe in him, or his power. That is just the evidence of his power ; he blinds men's eyes to their true state ; they are really captive, but think themselves free. Ask any converted man whether he believes in the power of Satan. You ask your comrade, who is a converted and saved man, about the power of Satan, and he will tell you, "When I was unconverted, I did not believe in the devil, nor in his power ; but when I got anxious I found how terrible was his power. And now that I

have come to Christ, and know the grace and saving power of the Lord Jesus, I know the devil is an enemy whose power is broken, but whose wiles are to be feared ; but I know One who is stronger than he."

When Paul was converted, he was sent by the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 18). The truth is this, you and I are no match for the devil. He has overcome every man save One—the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of men,—and he holds every man in his hand who has not been brought by grace to know the Lord Jesus Christ. And if a man does not believe the Gospel, what is the reason? God tells us. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world (the devil) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). That witness is very solemn, and should awaken every careless, unsaved man to bethink him of his awful condition.

At this juncture we read : "And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren ; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge." This father sending his son down to see how his brethren fared, reminds one of that lovely verse, "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). God has looked

down upon this scene, where the devil has overcome every man, and has sent into it, as a Saviour, His own blessed Son. Without doubt, in the scene before us, David is a striking type of Jesus. The previous chapter tells us a little about him. I read about this blessed one, who is the figure of Christ, "He was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (chap. xvi. 12). Samuel, instructed by God, anointed David as king over Israel; but the anointed king was unknown of his people. The one who was to be the deliverer of Israel did not come on the scene till this moment, when the whole of Israel was in desperate straits on account of the power arrayed against them. The father then sends the son, and David, taking in his hand the pledge of a father's love and care, comes into the camp, and salutes his brethren. "And as he talked with them, behold there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words; and David heard them." But David saw as well as heard, for "all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid" (vers. 22-24). David now learns the true state of affairs. "And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel" (ver. 25). That was a fair promise to any one who would enter the lists; but none would go out against the giant. "And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth

this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

While David was thus speaking, his eldest brother Eliab has his anger kindled against him, and he said, "Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." Battle! There was no battle to see; no one would fight. Battle! do you think there is a battle between you and the devil when he has got a firm hold of you? No, there is no battle. Until you are converted to God, he will lead, not tempt you. Till then he is your superior. Why did not Eliab go out? He was afraid to, but when a deliverer comes on the scene, he refuses him. His was surely a strange query, "Why camest thou down hither?" Ah! my friends, this is but a picture of the treatment Jesus received. God sent His Son into the world, and what did men do? "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i. 10, 11). The Son of God has come into this world, and men don't want Him. But He wants you. He wants your heart. He has come down not to see the battle, but to save man, who would certainly be eternally lost if He had not come. He has come to be a deliverer. Into the scene where sin has ruined every man God has sent His Son—His own eternal Son—that "whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You must perish if you have not everlasting life. Whoever you be, rich or poor, learned

or illiterate, you must perish. But what do you mean by "perish"? God grant that you may never know what it means. It is something dreadful, or the Son of God would not have stepped into the scene to deliver me from perishing. It is the outer darkness—the place where "the worm never dies," and where "the fire is not quenched." Perish not, I pray you. Do not perish through folly, through unbelief, through scorning the grace of God now. Eliab scorned the deliverer; do not walk in his footsteps.

David's reply to his brother is very touching, "What have I now done? *Is there not a cause?*" Why, he says, should I not have come? Go you out and meet the giant, Eliab. Go you out and meet the giant, Saul. Go you and meet the giant, Jonathan. But no, not one of them would do so, and David simply says, "*Is there not a cause?*" Was there not a cause, a need-be for Jesus' coming? There was.

Brought now before Saul, David says, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (ver. 32). How like this word is what is written of Jesus, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). The blessed Son of God has come into this scene, and become a man in the very spot where man has sinned, and where Satan has got power over him because of his sins; and on that account can bring the power of death to bear upon man. Into this scene the Son of God has come in grace, and has become a man that He might die for those who were under sentence of death. We die because we are men, sinful men. He became a man—a sinless man—in order that He

might die for others, and relieve them from the consequences of their sin. "Let no man's heart fail because of him ; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Assured of victory, David now goes forth to meet the giant. "And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head ; also he armed him with a coat of mail, and David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go ; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him" (vers. 38, 39).

Saul rigs him out with all his latest armour ; but David says, No, that won't do for me. Man's armour won't do to fight God's battles in, and man's mind will not apprehend God's truth. David then "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip ; and his sling was in his hand ; and he drew near to the Philistine" (ver. 40).

How the onlookers must have wondered as they saw him go out with only those five smooth stones to meet yon enormous man. Remember he was but a stripling—a lad of tender years, yet in faith in God he goes out to meet this tremendous man that is coming forth to meet him. I do not wonder that Goliath, when he saw him, his sling, and his five smooth stones, disdained him. We are told, "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him : for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance." The giant, so to speak, snuffed at him. What could that youth do? Ah ! my friends, do you know that God always uses simple instruments, and by

ways and means that man does not approve, He saves man. God's way of giving you life is that another man should go into death for you. God's way for us to get into heaven is quite opposed to man's idea. Man's thought is that it is by his own works, God's way is by another Man—His own Son—going down into the depths of death for you.

But those five smooth stones, what could they do? Saul, no doubt, when he saw David take them up and put them into his bag, said, What a fool! The idea of that stripling going out to meet that giant with those five stones is absolute folly. One stone was enough, however, to slay the giant with. But, to apply this,—How can men be saved? Only by the cross. Now-a-days men scout the idea of salvation by the cross of Christ. This is nothing new, for, wrote the apostle Paul, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). In these days as then, the preaching of the cross is to the learned Gentile downright folly. Folly! Ah! but what is it really? "Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks," it is "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I fully admit that "the preaching of the cross is to *them that perish* foolishness; but unto *us which are saved*, it is the power of God." Do you think it foolishness to believe that the dying agonies of Christ can be the eternal safety of those who believe in Him, and by His atoning work are thus righteously brought to God?

Men say the cross is folly. But believe me, it has brought me to God. It brought Paul to God. It brought the dying thief to God, and it has brought

millions to God. Thank God, for the cross ! “God forbid,” says Paul, “that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So say I with all my heart ! I know very well it is despised. But don’t you forget this—that Christ crucified is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and there is only one thing which can lift men out of their sins, and bring them to glory, and that is the death of the sinless Son of God. It was for sinners that He died on Calvary’s tree, and there is no other name whereby we must be saved. There is no other way to glory but the blood-stained pathway thus opened up through the dying agonies of Christ. You may smile at David’s stone, and laugh at Christ on the cross, but be fully assured of this, that you will spend eternity in hell unless you are born of God, and washed in the blood of the Son of God. I speak plainly. You have immortal souls. Eternity is before you, and I ask you, Where will you spend it ? You are spending your life in sin, and the wages of sin is death. Where will you spend eternity ? God would have you at His side, and would have you know the value of the cross of His Son now. God grant that you may know it.

Here, then, we have the truth of the cross in figure. David took the five smooth stones, and the giant, seeing the youth of ruddy and fair countenance, disdains him. “Am I a dog,” says the champion, “that thou comest to me with staves ? and the Philistine cursed David by his gods ” (ver. 43). The idea of that youth coming out to him with such childish weapons was more than he could stand. So spake the foe of Israel then, and so did Satan think when he led on man to

put Christ on the cross. He looked for easy and absolute victory. He met with utter defeat. "And the Philistine said unto David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." David, in effect, says to the giant, "The battle is really not between you and me ; it is between you and God. I am here for God." That is the point. Jesus is God's man. What a fool the man is who will choose to be the devil's man ! It is better to be God's man. I recollect some one writing to me once, "If you take that path, you will never be God's man in Edinburgh." Extraordinary title ! I would rather be "God's man" than have anything that the world could give me.

As the giant presses forward, David says : "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth ; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that THE LORD SAVETH not with sword and spear : for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands" (vers. 46, 47). Mark that ! the Lord saveth. You cannot save yourself ; I cannot save myself. It is the Lord who alone can save me. God alone can meet the need and ruin of man as a sinner, and I am shut up to accept God's Saviour. "And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and

slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead ; and he fell upon his face to the earth ” (ver. 49). He did not think of such a weapon as a sling. He was looking for arrows, and had protected himself with a great big shield ; but the stone slung by David went up with a curve, and just struck the giant on the forehead,—on the spot he least expected it. Satan little thought that the death of Jesus would annul death, and that by His being made sin, so sin would be put away, or he would not have plotted for His death. “ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him ; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith ” (vers. 50, 51). That was absolute victory. He cut off his head with his own sword. Christ too has, so to speak, cut off Satan’s head with his own sword. Do you know what death is ? It is the wages of sin consequent on man’s sin and guilt, and Satan can wield it as a sword over man’s conscience. Death is the judgment of God upon man as a sinner, and when it suits his purpose, the devil can hold over man the solemn truth that he is going to die. To the young he usually says : “ You won’t die for a long time yet. There is plenty of time, so you need not think about your soul yet.” When man is middle-aged, he says : “ You have to labour and work, and get on in the world, and you are really too busy to think about your soul.” When men get old, and they must die, then the devil will tell them, “ You have lived a good life,

so you need not be afraid to die." And if then, or at any time, men get anxious about their souls, then he alters his tactics, and holds over them the sense of what death is, and presses the fear of death upon them.

It is complete deliverance to a soul in bondage to see that although the wages of sin is death, yet death is the doorway to life—death is the pathway to peace and blessing. You and I can only be delivered by death; you and I can only be saved by death. The gates of hell are closed, and the gates of glory are opened for us, by death. Our death? Thank God, no! but the death of the sinless Man, upon whom death had no claim, yet who died "the just for the unjust."

When Satan led the world on to put Jesus to death, he committed the most senseless and short-sighted act that he ever could have done. But he is not the only actor at the cross, for Jesus voluntarily goes into death, and having so done, He meets the claims of God on man, sustains the judgment due to him in righteousness, and then He rises from the dead, and that, you will observe, on the ground that there has been a wonderful victory accomplished. In the spot where every other man has been defeated, Christ has won the victory. Death has claimed and held every other man. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from among the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 21). He went into death, and then came up out of it, victor over it, and thank God He is my Saviour. I wish He were yours. You may have Him to-night.

There is a remarkable New Testament scripture bearing on this point, I should like you to notice. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of

flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same (that is, he became a man), that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Wonderful tidings ! You and I die because we are men. He became a man that He might be able to die. He could have passed up into glory from this earth at any moment of His history, for death had no claim on Him, He being sinless, but then He would have left every man behind Him. He says to the one who believes in Him, I came down and died for you. I bore your judgment, and died your death, and I bring you to God in righteousness. I bore your judgment that I might deliver and redeem you. Just as David cut off Goliath’s head with his own sword, so by death—which is what the devil terrifies a man with—does Jesus deliver the soul that trusts in Him. Death, which was the wages of sin, has now opened the way of life for me, for “AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 27, 28). Death opens the pathway to glory for the believer now, because in the death of the Saviour atonement has been made. That atonement has been presented, and God has accepted it, and what has been the result ? God has raised from the dead, and glorified the blessed Man, who died on the cross. His exaltation is God’s answer to the sufferings of the Saviour, and is the proof of His absolute victory over every foe of God and man. Hallelujah !

Now observe what follows the giant's death in the scene before us. "And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled," and Israel "spoiled their tents" (vers. 51-53): The enemies are dispersed, and nothing remains to the men of Israel and Judah but to possess the spoil which David's victory has gained for them. David then comes back, and is led before Saul. And what has he got with him? He has the head of the Philistine in his hand. He is the victor, and has the proof of his victory in his hand as he goes to the king, and walks through the ranks of Israel. He has the giant's sword in one hand, and his head in the other. He does not say a word; he does not need to. The sword and the head that he carried told the tale of his victory more eloquently than any words, and at this point Jonathan's heart was captured.

There are five points about Jonathan here which are worthy of note. When David came into the camp, do you know what Jonathan was doing? He was *trembling*. Oh, you say, how do you know? Well, verses 11 and 24 tell me they were all afraid and fled; and Jonathan, though he is not named, was in the camp. At that point he was Jonathan *anxious*. When David went forth to meet the foe, and when Jonathan fixed his eye upon him, he was in a *hopeful* mood—he was Jonathan *hopeful*. As he looked on that wonderful conflict, and presently saw the giant fall, and his head lopped off with one stroke of his own sword, he was immensely relieved. "Thank God!" I am sure he would say, "*I am delivered*," and he would draw a long breath. Don't you tell me he did not take a long breath, as he got the sense that

the foe was overcome. Then he was Jonathan *delivered*. What is the next thing? As they brought in the spoil of the tents, he was Jonathan *enriched*. The climax is soon reached, for his heart is completely captured, and Jonathan became *devoted*. I wonder whether any of you have become devoted? "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (xviii. 1). What attracted Jonathan? It was the sense he had of the personal charms and self-sacrifice of David. Here is one of whom I knew nothing, but who, seeing our distress and misery, has "put his life in his hand"—as he says in the next chapter—and at the risk of his life has saved my life. Love to David sprang up in his heart, until, as Scripture says, "he loved him as his own soul." It was the love of David that begat love—"We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). I don't ask you to-night to love Jesus, but I can tell you that Jesus loves you. I never ask a man to give his heart to Jesus; I would not ask you to do it, because you will not do it; but if your heart gets attracted by a sense of the love of Christ for you, then you will yield it without effort. You can't help loving Him, because He has loved you.

Ah! get hold of this, ye who have served lust and sin and the devil, and are forging ahead in sin's pleasures to certain and everlasting judgment. Young man, you who are going on in your sin, the Saviour has come, and died for such as you. Oh, get hold of the truth that so affected Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Attachment to Christ is

a most blessed, even as it is a personal thing, and don't you be ashamed to own it if it really exists in your heart. Do you think it is a poor thing to be a Christian? Away with such a thought. It is the grandest thing in the world to be a Christian. I don't mean the Brummagem kind of thing of which we have so much—a profession of Christ without the knowledge of Christ—a mere head profession of the Lord without any heart for Him. By a Christian I mean a man who really knows and loves Christ. A Christian is a man whose heart has been touched by the love of Christ, who has seen the Saviour agonising and dying on the tree in his room and stead. Well said the poet:—

“He suffered in the shadow
That we might see the light.”

He was forsaken that you and I might be accepted. Let it be with you just now towards Jesus, as it was with Jonathan. “And it came to pass, . . . that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David.” And I look up to heaven to-night and I see a risen Saviour, an ascended Saviour, a living Man at the right hand of God to-night, and that Man is my Saviour in glory, and I would that the whole world could hear me testify of His love, and victory, and worth. Listen, O earth! In glory there is a Man alive, who once died upon the tree, and He died for me, and has delivered me and saved me, and that Man in glory is my Saviour, and my Lord and Master. Ah! would to God you could say the same, every one of you here to-night! Then would you imitate Jonathan, who, “because he loved him as his own soul, . . . stripped himself of the robe

that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle" (xviii. 3, 4). I think that was a fine sight—a grand start. Before that mighty assembly the king's son steps up, in the sight of all Israel, to the simple shepherd lad, and strips off his own robe. His heart belongs to David. He loves him as his own soul, and he gives him his robe, sword, and girdle. What does he say? David, I am thine; thy love has won mine in return. What do you say to-night? If you are converted to the Lord, is such your language? "Jesus, I am Thine." Thank God if, indeed, you can so speak, and from the bottom of your heart can say, "Jesus, I am Thine—spirit, soul, and body. Thine, Lord, to live for Thee, Thine to serve thee, and Thine to die for Thee, by grace, if need be." Do you think the Lord has no heart? Does not the Lord like to see our hearts true to Him? He says, "Lovest thou me?" Jonathan showed his love to David. It took a practical form; so should ours to Christ.

We greatly need to be a little more like poor Joe, who used to play the banjo in public-houses. He was going into the country one day, when he heard a voice. He looked over the hedge, and saw a crowd. He jumped over the hedge—what was this? Not a football match, forsooth! It was a field-preaching, and he thought he would like to hear what was being said. He got to the edge. He was convicted, interested, and heard of Jesus and the Saviour's love. Poor Joe heard, believed, and was saved. He got Christ for his Saviour, and his heart was filled with joy. What took place? He went straight home, and going to the fireside where the banjo hung, he took it

down and broke it across his knee. His wife asked him what he was doing. "I am converted, wife, and I can't use the banjo in the public-house for the Lord," and he threw the broken banjo into the fire. It was a simple act, but it showed that Joe felt his life would be changed now that he was converted.

When a man is really on the Lord's side, there will always be some evidence of it. He begins to follow the Lord. He is like blind Bartemeus, who when cured, "followed Jesus in the way." Jonathan surrendered heart and everything to David. It was a complete surrender of himself to the Deliverer. That is what is wanted to-day in the case of every young man converted to Christ. I beseech you to be whole-hearted in your surrender to the Lord. Devotedness pays ; half-heartedness is a profound mistake. Alas ! there are some believers who have too much of Christ to enjoy the world, and too much of the world to really enjoy Christ. That class is to be studiously avoided. They are no use in the Church, and get no respect from the world.

From this time Saul, doubtless angered by Jonathan's charming devotedness to David, begins to dislike and to persecute him. Thrice does he seek to slay him with a javelin. Then David disappears from the scene ; and "Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David ; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to theeward very good : for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine" (xix. 4, 5). The result is that Saul flings a javelin at Jonathan xx. 33). Three times had he attempted to slay

David, but when he is out of sight, Saul attempts to kill Jonathan, who stood up for him. That is just like the Christian ; when Christ is out of sight, he has to stand up for his Lord, and is persecuted. I don't expect anything else than persecution. The Lord Jesus said : " The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you ; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John xv. 20).

This persecuting action of Saul should have opened Jonathan's eyes to the true state of matters. David was God's king, and he should have fully identified himself with him, no matter at what earthly loss. Jonathan ought to have been downright. He goes out into the field and speaks with David, but he does not accompany him to the cave of Adullam (xxii. 1, 2). He is bound by his home ties, by natural affection, like too many a faint-hearted Christian to-day. A little later Jonathan "went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." And he said unto him, " Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee ; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee ; and that also Saul my father knoweth." He, as it were, says to David, Thou shalt be king, and I am delighted that thou shouldst be first, and I shall be second. " And they two made a covenant before the Lord ; and David *abode in the wood*, and Jonathan *went to his house*" (xxiii. 16-18). He ought to have flung in his lot with him absolutely, and have followed David fully. Had he done so he would have been preserved, and he would have had the second place in the kingdom. As it was, he was ingloriously

slain at Gilboa, and when David came to the throne, Jonathan's body is found nailed to the walls of Bethshan (xxx. 12).

It is to be carefully noted that when David speaks of his mighty men, and records the deeds of those who were faithful to him in the time of his rejection, the name of Jonathan is conspicuous by its absence (2 Sam. xxiii.). David could not righteously put his name among those of his mighty men as one who had been outstandingly true to him in the day of his exile. And I learn this lesson, that the Lord counts upon our hearts being true to himself. Jonathan's finish was not as bright as it might have been, and this sad fact God records as a warning to us.

The Lord grant now that your heart may be surrendered to Christ. Make a good start—start this evening—start for glory, start among the company of the redeemed. Make up your mind for the Lord this evening. Surely He is worthy. The love of Christ is a charming thing, and had I ten thousand hearts, I would yield them all up to Jesus. He died for me. May you be enabled by grace to yield yourself to the Saviour from this hour, and serve Him faithfully till He comes.

A YOUNG MAN OF EGYPT; OR A CHANGE OF MASTERS.

I SAM. xxx.

Lecture VII.

IT is a great thing, my friends, to have a good master, —a just, a fair, a righteous master,—whether it be for time or eternity. Again, it is a bad thing to have a poor master, whether for time or for eternity ; and the lesson I learn from this interesting scene in David's life is the importance of being on the right side. Now, no man that is unconverted in this hall to-night is on the right side of the line. No man here this evening, who is unsaved, has a good master. You may tell me you are your own master. That is very easily said, but it is not true. " Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin " (John viii. 34).

David comes out, in this passage, as a remarkable type of the Lord Jesus Christ in the position in which he is now. There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ is " Kings of kings and Lord of lords," but the world does not believe it. The Lord Jesus Christ is now exalted at God's right hand. God said to Him, " Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Jesus has been in this world. No one will deny that He has been here. He has been refused here. The world to-day stands convicted of the solemn truth that the Son of God has

been in this scene in sovereign grace. Divine goodness has been personified in the person of the Son of Man,—and the world spat in His face, smote Him with a rod, plucked off the hair from His cheeks, clamoured for His blood, crowned Him with thorns, and hung Him on a tree. When it came to be a question of choice between the Saviour and the robber, the world preferred Barabbas, and said, “Away with this man ; crucify him !” Jesus was “numbered with transgressors,” led to the cross, gibbeted, mocked, and slain. He was taken down from the cross by loving hands and buried, and the world hoped they would never see Him again. In that they are much mistaken, for “God raised him from the dead.” Hatred slew Him, love buried Him, but righteousness raised Him. Before that, however, fear sealed Him in the tomb in which love had placed Him, and fear also put a guard of soldiers round about that tomb. Nor was that all. When He rose from the dead, do you know what took place ? His murderers paid the soldiers “large money”—hush-money—to tell lies and say that He was not risen, but that His body had been stolen away by night by His disciples. That was a lie, whereas the truth was this, God had raised Him from the dead, and now He is alive, and has passed up and sat down in glory. But mark ! He is coming back again, and the day is not far distant when the rejected Saviour—the Son of God—will come again into this scene.

This is what I find in figure here. David comes to Ziklag, and finds the city burned, and everything taken away. His foes have worked their will, and have done what they liked. The city is burned, and every-

body is taken captive. It is just a figure of what has taken place in the world's treatment of Jesus. When man gets his own way, he always makes away with Jesus. "What shall I do," says Pilate, "with Jesus, which is called Christ?" They all said unto him, "Let him be crucified." See what David does here. He turns to the Lord. He calls on Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod. "And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And the answer of the Lord is very striking: "Pursue," says He; "for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all" (ver. 8). Just so will it be with the Lord Jesus Christ. Where is Christ? At the right hand of God, and the world is trying to forget Him. Men are now boldly saying, There is no God, no Christ, no heaven, and no hell, and that the story of Jesus is a downright myth.

But what is Christ now doing? Sitting quietly at the right hand of God; but time is rolling on, and the moment is drawing near, when God will make His enemies to be His footstool. That is very solemn for the foes of Jesus. He waits in patience for the day when He will deal with all those that oppose Him. It is no good to say that the world is not opposed to Christ. Let me take the history of any of you here to-night, and ask whether that history has been one of affection to Christ, of subservience to Christ, of devotedness to Christ, or whether it has been one of opposition to Christ. Take a stand for Jesus, and you will find out the world's opposition.

I recollect perfectly well one Saturday evening coming from the country in the train. I was in a long

third-class carriage. About the middle of the carriage there were nine or ten people who had evidently been spending the day together, and they had got what you would call jolly. They were very happy, and there was no doubt they had imbibed a good deal of spirituous liquor. They were musical, and sang fairly well, I must say, a lot of Scotch songs. The carriage was full, and everybody listened. At Portobello they all got out, and the compartment was filled by strangers. As the train moved off, I rose and said, "My friends, I have listened with great interest to these songs, but I am not a Scotchman, and I thought I would like to tell you of a song of my native country." They looked at me, curious to know where I had come from. "Well," I said, "the song is this—I cannot give you the tune, but I can give you the words—' And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth ' " (Rev. v. 9, 10).

Then I went on and very simply preached the Gospel till the rattle of the train became so loud that my voice could not be heard. At that moment, a distant signal being at "danger," the train was brought to a stop. There was a dead silence in the carriage, broken at length by a voice from the other end, saying, "Is he drunk?" Now the fact was the people who had gone out were, I will not say drunk, but on the high road to it. A second voice said, "He is not drunk." A third added, "I think he is a good man."

A fourth rejoined, "But he is not a wise man." "Why?" asked a fifth. "Because he does not know the time or the place," replied the other. The time or the place to speak about Jesus! Will you tell me when the world wants to hear about the Saviour, and I will be your man, and be there? You see this world does not want Jesus.

How often during my life have I stood at the corner of the streets, and witnessed the servants of God preaching the Gospel of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, when along comes Constable No. 246, and he says to the preacher, "You must move on. You must not cause an obstruction." "All right," says the preacher, and moves on. I go down the street, and three blocks off is a German band, and crowds of people, but I do not find Constable 246 saying to it "Move on." No, the world likes music. It does not love Christ. That is the truth. You know it. You know I am speaking the truth to-night. The world does not want Jesus. But Jesus wants you.

"Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?" says the despised king. God's answer is: "Pursue, for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Well, David starts. He has six hundred men in his retinue. It is a grand thing to be among Christ's six hundred. You have heard of another six hundred who, in obedience to orders, went to certain death on the plains of Balaclava. "Noble six hundred!" as the dead poet has well said. Suppose that there are only six hundred in this city to-night on the Lord's side, are you among them? Are you one of the six hundred? Can you, with honesty and truthfulness, say to-night, I am

among the Lord's six hundred? If not, understand well that we want recruits for Christ. We get a recruit here in this chapter.

The pursuit is a long one, and in course of time, when they come to a certain torrent Besor, we read that two hundred were so faint that they could not pass over, and so stayed there. Well, if there be some Christians who are faint in their Master's service, the Lord will not forget them. David does not forget his men. He is a good master. Now Christ is my Master, and He does not forget any active service. A cup of cold water given in His name is held in everlasting remembrance. David passes on with the four hundred men, and found a stranger in the field. Do I find you a stranger to-night? There are a good many in this hall to-night whom I know by head-mark, to be the Lord's servants. I am thankful for those concerning whom I can say, That man belongs to Jesus, and that man is following Christ.

Now notice what David's men do. "They found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him, for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, for three days and three nights" (vers. 11, 12). His case looked very bad. He was almost dead. My unconverted friend, your case is worse. You are dead. You are "dead in trespasses and sins." This man was not dead. Life was in him, but he was in a starving condition, and exactly what he needed, David and his servants could minister to him. That is exactly

what the Gospel does. What you need, the servants of Christ can proclaim to you. They can minister to you "the bread of life" and "the water of life." Are you a needy sinner, a man ruined before God, needing and desiring salvation? Then it is proclaimed to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it salvation you want? You may have it. Christ the Saviour has died for such as you, and there is nothing but grace in the heart of God towards you. This is the day of grace, the day of salvation. The day of judgment is not yet come. God is, as it were, putting the drag on the wheels of His chariot of judgment, but the day of judgment must take the place of the day of grace.

Ere the day of judgment arrives, what has come? Grace! And what is grace? It is God's love putting on a new character—a new colour. After man has sinned, and before the day of judgment the Son of God appears as Saviour. Grace is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world, and fulfilling the work which He only could do—the work of atonement and redemption, which enables God in righteousness to save the guiltiest man. There is no man *too bad* for Christ. I have met many who were *too good* for Christ. They did not want saving. They did not need conversion. I remember one such man. He was a hall-keeper.

I was speaking in Bristol to a meeting of between two and three thousand people. Hall-keepers like to see a full house, and to know that the speaker is heard in every part of their hall. At the close of the meeting he came up to me and said, "A grand meeting to-night." "Yes," I replied, "a very

good meeting." "Full hall," said he, "and everybody heard you." "Thank God," I replied, "there was better than that, God has been working, and saving souls. Did you hear the voice of the Son of God?" "Oh!" he said, "I was outside. I was looking after some boys who were making a noise." "Did you ever hear the voice of the Saviour?" I asked. "What do you mean?" said he. "Are you converted?" "Converted! I don't think you know me, sir." "No," I replied, "I never had the pleasure of meeting you till to-night." "Converted!" said he, "conversion is all very well for these wicked rascals found in the lower parts of the town, but perhaps you don't know that not a drop of the cursed thing has gone down my throat for six and thirty years." Then he drew himself up, as much as to say, I am the one man in the world that does not need a Saviour. I left him. I have no gospel for a man like that; he is far too good for Jesus. He was wrapped up in a coat of mail of his own self-righteousness. It would require a seventy-two ton gun of the Holy Ghost, so to speak, to break through that coat of mail. That man needed crushing up. He needed breaking down.

This poor Egyptian, however, in our chapter wanted neither crushing up nor breaking down. He wanted picking up, and that is what he got. What he needed David ministered to him. And they gave him not only "bread and water," but what illustrates, in a certain sense, the excess of grace, for "they gave him a piece of cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten his spirit came again to him." The Gospel not only meets the need, the downright deep need of the sinner's soul, in pardoning his sins

and bringing him to God, but it lavishes that which rejoices and charms the soul. It not only reveals to the soul his pardon as a guilty sinner, but it fills the heart with joy. I don't mind telling you frankly that it is thirty-three years since God saved me one Sunday evening in London. And what has gone on in these thirty-three years? Every year that has passed was better than the one previous. To-night I am happier than ever. After thirty-three years spent in the service of the Saviour, what do I find? Fuller joy and gladness, deeper happiness, more peace and joy, each just like the snowball rolling and gathering. To-night I would give anything under the sun for you to know what I know. Would to God that you knew the Saviour that I know. I can commend my Master, my Saviour, to every soul in this hall to-night, and if you have never been brought to have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, give me your hand and let me bring you to Him just now. It is the business of the evangelist to bring the sinner to Jesus, and that is what I find in this story. "They brought him to David." That was the best thing that ever happened to this young man. The Gospel does similarly. It brings a man to Jesus. The Gospel meets you where you are. Oh that I could bring you to Jesus!

When brought in destitution and misery—a foe and a stranger—to David, before a single question is put the Egyptian's need is met, and I have no doubt, as he opened his eyes, and his strength came to him again, he would say to himself, "I have got into good company." He was quite right. When he heard the men speaking of the one into whose presence he was brought, and learned that it was David, he must have

said to himself, "I am in the presence of the one against whom I have helped to do so much mischief, and whose city I have burnt." Without doubt conscience acted. It is always a good day for a man when he listens to the voice of his conscience. "And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire" (vers. 13, 14).

Now, observe that David's two questions are answered in a most honest way by this young man; and I would to God that every young man could hear from heaven the voice of the despised and rejected Saviour, as He says to each one, "To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou?" That is a serious question. To whom do I belong? There are but two masters. Christ said no man can serve two masters. If Christ is not your master, then mammon is the means that the devil takes to keep and hold you by. Mammon! A little money! How many a man has sold his soul for money? Judas did, and he has had many followers.

There was a shipwreck on our coasts some time ago. A ship struck upon a sunken rock, and the lifeboat put out to rescue the crew. The lifeboat drew near that sinking ship, and all got safely in except the captain and the first mate. "Get aboard," said the captain to the latter. "Wait a minute, captain," and he dived down the companion ladder to fetch

something from the cabin. The captain saw the folly of the act, and jumped into the lifeboat, which pushed off at once, just as the vessel was submerged. The mate who had gone down to the cabin went to the bottom. All the rest were saved. A few days afterwards divers went out to see what could be done with the vessel, and they found the corpse of the mate in the cabin. In his right hand was something tightly grasped. They brought him on deck, and unclasped the clenched fist. His purse came out. They opened it. It contained—eighteen pence! And that man lost his life for a wretched eighteen pence! Ah, you say, What a fool! Do I hear you say, What a fool to lose his life for eighteen pence? But what are you risking your soul for? It may mean pounds in your case; but, mark, your soul is at stake. “To whom belongest thou?” Whom are you serving? Money may be your god here, but it will be no company for you in hell. Lucre may be your object now, it will give you no consolation in the lake of fire. God grant that you may find the true riches. I implore you, Come to Jesus!

“To whom belongest thou, and whence art thou?” says the king here to this stranger, and gets for answer, “I am a young man of Egypt.” I am a worldling. Egypt in Scripture is the figure of the world—where Satan reigns. Egypt is the type of the world as a sphere of sin, lust, and folly, and holds every man until he is converted and brought to God. This man says, “I am a young man of Egypt,” but he goes further—“Servant to an Amalekite.” Amalek has a large place in Scripture. It is the flesh, used by the devil to keep a man away from God. He does

not care how he keeps you, or how he holds you. He is not careful as to the means by which he maintains his grip of you. "Divers lusts and pleasures" are his tackle. With one man it is money, with another the wine cup, with another the gambling hell, with another the card table, with another the race-course. With others it may merely be the football field, the cricket field; or something yet more refined, as music, painting, sculpture, and the like; but Satan uses the flesh to be your keeper.

It is a very small matter what comes in between your soul and Christ. If there be, as it were, but the thickness of the finest piece of gold leaf between your soul and Christ, where are you? You are on your road to eternal judgment. It is better far to own that you are the servant of the Amalekite, than to shut your eyes to your real state. This young man fully owns his, saying, "And my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick." I think that is very touching. He was left to die like a dog in the field, because he could not be of use to his old master. The devil eventually treats all his servants badly. Look at the prodigal in Luke xv. As long as he had plenty of money, he was "Hail fellow, well met." As long as his funds held out he was sought for, but afterwards "no man gave unto him." I daresay some of you know the same thing. What a nice fellow you were when you had plenty of money. Everybody was your friend. When your money ran out some of your boon companions—your quondam friends—put up their glasses, and even then did not see you. They simply dropped you when you were of no more use to them. When you want the world, the world does

not want you. That is the example you get from this scene.

What a tale ! “ My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.” I was of no more use to him, and he left me to die like a dog in the field. You know the story of Beau Brummel—the man who said to royalty, “ George, ring the bell.” He was the leader of Europe’s fashion. The cut of his coat and the shape of his collars were copied, and so favoured was he by royalty that he made a bet that he would ask a royal prince to ring the bell, and he did it. The prince, offended by the request, nevertheless complied, and the bell was rung. When the footman came, the command was given, “ Order Mr Brummel’s carriage,” and from that moment he fell. You know how he died. In a dirty, low garret in Paris, felled by the most loathsome disease that can attack a man—small-pox—he lay alone and neglected, with none to soothe him, or close his dying eyes. That is just an illustration of how the devil treats his servants. You had better change your master. It is far better to be on Christ’s side.

The young Egyptian, encouraged by David’s grace, makes a clean breast of his sins. “ We made an invasion on the south . . . and we burned Ziklag with fire.” He says in effect—I know who you are, the one against whom I have sinned ; but I know that there is enough grace in your heart to forgive all, even though I helped to put the flame to your city. The man who owns his sin always gets blessing from God. The man who owns his true state is the man who invariably receives mercy from God. Oh that you might own your sin, and if you have been until

now a man of the world, and amongst those who are serving the flesh and the devil, would now change your master ! God is giving you a fine chance to-night.

“ And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company ? ” He says, as it were, Will you have a new master ? That is the proposal God makes to you to-night. Young man, will you have a new master ? Unconverted, unsaved man, will you have a new master ? It is a very fine answer that David gets here. “ Swear unto me by God that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company ” (ver. 13). He wants to be sure of his own safety, and of his full and final deliverance from the captivity which had been so galling to his spirit. “ Canst thou bring me down to this company ? ” is Christ’s word to you also. Wilt thou be converted, and go back to your old friends, taking God with you ? The Lord converted me at ten o’clock one Sunday night, and what did I do ? I went straight away home to my lodgings in the north of London, where was a young fellow who lived with me. He had been that night at the meeting with me, but at the close of the preaching he went home, while I stayed, and was converted.

When I got home he was seated in front of the fire, and tears were rolling down his checks. He was anxious to be saved. I said, “ Well, Tom, how is it with you ? ” He turned and said, “ I see how it is with you. I know it by your face. ” “ Thank God ! ” I replied, “ I am saved. I believe in Jesus, and He has saved me. ” And then what did I do ? I tried to bring my friend to Jesus, and within twenty-four

hours I had the joy of seeing him at the Saviour's feet, and seeing him on the Lord's side. There is nothing more glorious and blessed than, first of all, to come to the Saviour, and then to bring men to Him.

"Canst thou bring me down to this company?" the Lord Jesus Christ says to you to-night. Wilt thou be Mine from this night forth? is the query. "Swear to me by God that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and *I will bring thee down to this company*," said the Egyptian. Assured of salvation, he would willingly serve. So is it with the redeemed soul now. But you need have no doubts as to the Lord's purpose regarding you. He will not kill you! Christ kill you? "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56). He came to bless. The Son of God came in grace to bring you life. Kill you? Who would dream of putting a question like that to Christ now? Yet it is in some hearts to-night. To all such doubting believers, what does the Lord say? "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 27).

Faith confides in Jesus, and then follows Him, or, as in this case, starts to serve Him. If you receive Jesus now, there is a link formed between you and the blessed Saviour that never can be broken by any possibility. A new life, a new history, a new service start with conversion. God saves you where you are, and you start on Christ's side. Perhaps you say, I will believe the Gospel. I have been thinking of it many a time. I have been coming to these meetings

for six or seven nights, but to-night—— Well! what about to-night? Who says, "I will bring thee down to this company"? Who will be the Lord's from this moment? Will you?

The young Egyptian brought David down to his old company, and what was the result? They were found "eating, and drinking, and dancing." That is just what the men of the world are doing now, "eating, drinking, and dancing." They forget the past, and do not fear the future. They ignore sin, and hope that there will be no judgment, but judgment comes. What follows? "David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day, and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode on camels and fled" (ver. 17). Some of them—four hundred young men—got away, but, in the day when the Lord comes in judgment, there will be no camels for you to flee on. There will be no way of escape then; you may be perfectly sure of that. "For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3). You had better get to Jesus now. If you are wise you will turn to the Saviour now. If you belong to Him to-night, you can enter on His service straight off.

Get under the flag of salvation, and become one of those who gladly own Christ as their Master. I know that your old comrades may call you a turn-coat. Never mind that. When I was converted I was to have sung at a concert, but I wrote to the conductor and said, "The Lord has saved me, and if I come down to your concert I shall have to sing about

Christ. I cannot sing about anything else now ; I must sing about Christ, and if I do so I am rather afraid I shall spoil your concert." I did not go, and when people asked where I was, the answer was given that it was feared that my head was turned. It was better than that, my heart was turned, and I wish you had the same complaint. I wish you would turn round and start for the Lord. I have such a good Master, and such a good service now, that I can heartily commend Him and it to you. It is a magnificent thing to be a servant of the Lord, and I pity the man who is still on the devil's side. I implore you, Get out of that damnation corps—the company serving under the black flag of eternal damnation. Get to the Lord, and if your course in life be long or short, there will be nothing but sweetness and gladness in it.

Look at what follows here ! Look at the spoil they got. And what about the two hundred who were stopped by the flood of the brook Besor ? Ah, they got the same reward as those who went to the battle ! David was faithful and considerate to those whose weakness had detained them. " As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff : THEY SHALL SHARE ALIKE " (ver. 24). The rewards are yet to be distributed, for faithful service, and as David did not forget the men who abode with the stuff, so Christ our Lord says, " Behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be " (Rev. xxii. 12).

The truth of *reward* for service is very fully developed in the New Testament. It is never a

motive for devotedness, but is always a holy incentive. No action done for Christ can ever be forgotten, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark ix. 41). Again, we read: "A certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (Luke xix. 12, 13). When the Lord returns one man can say, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds" (ver. 16). He is set over ten cities. Another says, "Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds" (ver. 18). In this case the *ability* of the servant would seem to be equal, but their *devotedness* or their zeal differed, and the reward is proportionate—rule over ten cities, and five respectively. On the other hand, we read, "Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man *according to his several ability*" (Matt. xxv. 15). Here the ability differs, and the talent committed in trust is in view of that. When the Lord returns the first can say, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me *five* talents; behold I have gained beside them five talents more" (ver. 20). The second says, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me *two* talents; behold I have gained two other talents beside them." To each of these, whose *ability* differed, but whose *devotedness was equal*,—for each had doubled his capital,—the Lord says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been *faithful* over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (vers. 21, 23). The

ability differed, but, the devotedness being equal, the reward is identical.

To serve such a Master is joy indeed. Forget not that He says, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John xii. 26).

In conclusion, I implore you to turn to the Lord now, and then if your friends should call you a turn-coat, I will tell you what answer you should give them. Just say to them, "Imitate me, and you will be on the right side of the line, and will have the right Master." May you give your hearts to Jesus now, and from this night forth be able to say, I am on Christ's side through infinite grace, and am seeking to serve Him, the best of Masters.

MEPHIBOSHETH; OR, A GOOD FINISH.

2 SAM. iv. 4, ix., xvi. 1-4, xix. 24-30.

Lecture VIII.

THE story of Mephibosheth is to me exceedingly interesting, because it shows in a picture what man is in his natural ruined state, and how the grace of God can meet a man where he is, and what the effect of that grace will be upon the heart that has tasted it. The first thing we get in his history is when Mephibosheth was a child of five. Tidings come from Jezreel of the death of Saul and Jonathan. His grandfather and father were ignominiously slain on the mountains of Gilboa by the Philistines, and when the tidings came, "his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame" (2 Sam. iv. 4).

Why did she fly? Why did that nurse take up that child of five years old, and fly? She reasoned exactly in the same way as man does about God. She reasoned from the conduct of Saul to David, as to what the conduct of David would be to the posterity, the offspring, of Saul. We have seen, on a previous night, how Saul had persecuted David, how he had hunted him like a partridge on the mountains. She knew that Saul hated David. She inferred that David would hate Saul, and that he would hate all the offspring of Saul. She argued,—Here is the real heir to the throne: Saul is gone, and Jonathan is dead.

The direct heir to Saul's throne is this child, Mephibosheth ; and now David will certainly get to the throne, for all Israel knows that David is marked out for the throne by God ; he will be sure to cut off Saul's posterity ; but I will save this child from his vengeance. She took him from wrath, as she supposed, and in her haste she dropped him. He was injured, and crippled for life.

Man also is a cripple before God. Man has got away from God—every man ! Adam first of all fell, and in his fall the whole of his family have got into a condition of distance from God. You may turn and say to me, "We admit that we are sinners at a distance from God, but we could not help being born sinners." I allow that, but there is now no reason why you should *remain* at a distance from God. If you have not yet been converted, and led to know God as your Saviour, the reason is very simple. You prefer to remain where you are.

Turn to the next passage in Mephibosheth's history, and read the 9th of 2nd Samuel, "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake ?" (ver. 1.) Here we shall find that Mephibosheth is not only grown, but has a child. I don't suppose I shall go very far wrong in saying that at this time Mephibosheth must have been a man of between twenty and thirty years. And what has he done ? He has *remained away* from David. But why did he not go up to David ? He was afraid. He looked upon David in the same way as his nurse did, as the hereditary foe of his family. It is so with us. We have all sinned, and are away from God ; and our hearts being

deeply alienated from God, every man has the thought—God is against me. Lie! Lie of Satan! Foul lie of hell! God is not against man. He is for man.

It is man who is against God. It is you and I who are by nature against God. We have been opposed to God, and not God opposed to us. No, my friends, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ clearly solves this question. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 31, 32), conclusively proves that God is for us. He is not opposed to man. We sometimes hear of God being reconciled to man. Scripture does not so speak. "And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Cor. i. 21). It is man who is at a distance from God, and needs reconciliation. It is your heart and mine that are at a distance from God; but now God's love has effected reconciliation in the case of every believer in Jesus! God was offended at man's sin, but atonement has been made by Jesus' death. God has received the atonement that Jesus has made, and man has to receive the reconciliation. "For if, when we were enemies, *we* were *reconciled* to God by the death of his Son; much more, *being reconciled*, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 10, 11). What reconciles the heart of man to God? It is the thought—God loved me, when I did not love Him; Jesus died for me, when I did not care for Him.

This ninth chapter brings us to a point of immense interest in Mephibosheth's history, where he gets really

to know the heart of David. The kingdom is established. David is crowned. His foes have been put down. He is established on the throne, and in the calm quiet of the kingdom he is able to say, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" What a beautiful picture of the goodness of God! What a beautiful illustration of the grace of God at this very hour! Why have we this meeting in this hall to-night? I believe that this meeting found its origin in heaven. It was prompted by God, and I hear His voice saying, as it were, "Is there yet any left of the lost race of Adam, that I may show him kindness for Jesus' sake?" Is there an unsaved man—is there a lost man—is there an unpardoned man, within these walls to-night? The voice of God is heard saying, in His grace, "I will show him kindness for Jesus' sake;" for observe, God has righteous ground for dealing with sinners thus. Man has deeply sinned; but before the day of God's righteous judgment, His own blessed Son has entered the scene where man has sinned, and, dying for the sinner, has made atonement to God for his sins, so that God may bless in righteousness the one who believes in Jesus. Is there yet any left of the house of Adam, that God may show kindness to him to-night? To the foe, to the enemy, to the opponent, is this divine, this sovereign grace extended. God loves his enemies. He has loved us when we did not love Him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Ziba, a servant of the house of Saul, could give

useful witness in the case before us. The king says to him, "Art thou Ziba? and he said, Thy servant is he." Every word has a meaning in Scripture, and this man's name means "Plantation," and you find what he was afterwards. He was a man who was always looking after himself—who, as the saying goes, looked after the main chance, and he did so as long as he could. He gives witness of one to whom David may show kindness. The king says, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" (ver. 3.) That is a remarkable word, "the kindness of God." A beautiful word! David looks around him, and says, "My heart is full of benevolence. Is there yet any left of the house of my foe? is there left any descendant of the man who hunted me, and sought me that he might slay me, and thrice threw javelins at me? is there left any that—I may wreak my vengeance upon him? ah! no—that I may show the kindness of God unto him." Beautiful word!

You may say to me, "What is the kindness of God?" We have the very expression used in the New Testament. We are left in no doubt as to what the kindness of God is. In writing to Titus, the apostle Paul says: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ

our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus iii. 3-7). Wonderful words ! The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man is shown in saving us. I don't deny that God is good, and that He sends His rain on the just and the unjust, and causes His sun to shine on the evil, as well as on the good ; but that is only in the way of providence. Where the real kindness and love of God come out, is in the giving of His own blessed Son, and that Son dying on the tree—the Just for the unjust. The kindness of God ! Do you know it ? Have you tasted it ? Ah ! my friend, are you still a stranger to this kindness of God ? What is it ? say you. It is the knowledge of salvation,—it is the knowledge of eternal life,—it is the knowledge of God as a Father,—and it is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. It is "The kindness of God *our Saviour*,"—not God our judge. We all thought about God as a judge. There is not one here, if he is honest, but will confess that his primary thought was that God was a judge. "God our Saviour," I read here. "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done,"—that is, your works and mine are set aside,—"but according to his mercy *he saved us*." Who in this company to-night can really say, I am saved ? If you are not, may God help you to believe the Gospel, and see the truth. Then will you be able to say, I know the kindness of God ; He has saved me this night by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as David was in quest of some of Saul's house-

hold to bless them, so God is in quest of man to bless him. If there be only one young man in this hall to-night unsaved, then I have a message from God to him. I have a message from the God of love, and that message is a message of kindness. The great point is to find the man for whom the message is designed. Ziba indicated the man in David's day. He said, "Jonathan hath yet a son, *who is lame on his feet.*" He was a cripple. You could not get much out of a man lame on his feet. What would be the use of a man lame on his feet running in a race? What progress could a man lame on his feet make in climbing a mountain. Do you suppose you will find your way into heavenly glory lame on your feet. No!

Now, tell me, ye who are lame on your feet, would you not like to know Jesus to-night? Would you not like to have this blessed Saviour as yours? Alas! I am lame on my feet, do you reply? True, but it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy that God saves us. If you are ever going to be saved, how do you suppose it will be effected? There was a young man in this hall last Sunday evening. Another young man asked him, "Are you a Christian?" "No, but I think it is time to become a Christian;" and then he added, as though that would conclude the matter, and save him, "I think I will join the Christian Association." Ah! is it by your own will, and jumping into the company of other people, that you hope to become a Christian? That is not the way at all. The way to become a Christian, is to know Christ. The man who is really a Christian has been brought to see that he is a sinner, —a ruined, lost, undone sinner; and then, when

oppressed by the sense of his distance, he hears and believes the Gospel. By the Word of God he is brought to have to do with God, just as you will see Mephibosheth is here brought to David. David learns of his existence, and of his condition. He next asks, Where is he? "Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar." That was a long way off. Mephibosheth lived scores of miles away from Jerusalem. So did you and I live in "a far country," like the prodigal son. That is where most men spend a good deal of their time. I admit that Lo-debar means "with pasture"; but do you think the pasture of Lo-debar could be equal to what was then in the king's palace? Do you think "the husks that the swine did eat" are to be compared with "the fatted calf" of the father's house? Do you think the pleasures of this world are to be compared with the blessedness of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and God as your Father? I assure you I tried well the pleasures of sin, but they did not satisfy. Nothing will satisfy your heart but the knowledge of God, and Him you may only know in the person of His Son—the Lord Jesus Christ. I grant that you are at a distance; but as the eye of the father was upon the son when he was "a great way off," so is the eye of God upon each one here this evening.

"And king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar." Sent and fetched him! Oh, what grace! No sooner does he know all about him than forsooth he must send and fetch him. I think I see the scene at that moment, when this fugitive—perhaps in the midst of

his daily avocations—hears that a message from the king, borne by a herald with the king's apparel, has arrived. He is arrested. "You are Mephibosheth?" says the messenger. "I am." "I have a message for you." "For me?" says Mephibosheth. "From whom?" "King David!" "And what is the message?" asks the trembling young man. "He has sent me to bring you from the spot where you are right up to Jerusalem—to his very presence." I believe conscience began to work, and Mephibosheth would no doubt ask himself, "What does he want? What will he do with me?"

Just as David's messenger approached Mephibosheth, so am I here to-night from heaven to call you. I am a messenger of God from glory to every unsaved man in this hall. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). What do I want? I want you for Christ. I want your heart for Jesus! I want you to be brought to the Saviour! Young man! come to the Lord! Turn this night, and know that blessed Saviour! Though you are yet in your sins, and at a distance from God, in an unregenerate condition, hear the Gospel, and turn to know the blessed Saviour in glory. God's message bids you come to Him. I do not doubt that when Mephibosheth heard the message, the query would arise in his mind, "How can I go?" I doubt not that David's messenger had beasts of burden to bring him from the far country to the king's presence. So it is to-night. What is it that brings a man to God? It is always the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit. It is invariably some bit

of Scripture—perhaps only one word—that comes into a man's mind, and turns him to God. God is sovereign in His grace. A young man passed a hall where there was preaching going on, in a careless, godless frame of mind. The door was on the swing, and he looked in. All he heard the preacher say was, "Turn or burn! turn or burn!" He was converted! A man, one Sunday evening, committed burglary, and was surprised by the police in the act. He fled, and was pursued. As he fled from the officers of the law, he turned a corner where stood a mission hall. Thinking to escape detection by this act, he entered the preaching place,—an unlikely place, you would think, for a godless thief! The preacher at that moment gave out his text, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7). He escaped the policeman, but he did not escape God. He was convicted of his sin, and, thank God! it ended in his conversion. God delights, in grace, to meet a man where he is in his sin. The call to you to-night is to know God. And I want you to make up your mind.

"Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence." It was a wonderful moment when he got into David's presence. He would recollect how he had acted. His own conscience would say, You kept up the grudge, you know. You kept out of David's presence; you never came to Jerusalem; you never helped to crown him. Your voice was not heard in that shout, "God save the king!" on the day of the coronation. Oh, no! He had kept far away, and he had reasoned thus: My grandfather

hated David, David will hate me. I must keep away as far as possible from him. And you reason: I have sinned; God hates sin, therefore He must hate me. I will keep away as far from Him as I can.

Stop! That is an immense mistake. What you want is to come near to Him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). Mephibosheth gets into David's presence, and makes obeisance. He falls down upon his face. His conscience is in the presence of the king, and it is a wonderful moment when the conscience gets into the presence of God. "And David said, Mephibosheth,"—he calls him by his name. I think he was a little startled, but he replies, "Behold thy servant!" He would take the place of a servant. "And David said unto him, Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually" (ver. 7). What a beautiful word to a troubled soul! "Fear not!" It is God's lovely word of encouragement to the anxious soul. Fear not! Art thou troubled? Art thou anxious? Art thou afraid to draw near to God? What does He say? "Fear not!" That is the word of the Lord. "I will show thee kindness for *Jesus'* sake." Observe, that God has now righteous ground for His action. God does not come down and bless man at the expense of His own character or righteousness. No; sin has been demonstrated at, and has been judged on, the cross, where the sinless Saviour died for the guilty sinner; and

now, you observe God in righteousness is able to come out and bless man. "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and *thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.*"

In effect David says : I shall bring you into my house, and you shall have a son's place. At this unfolding of grace, Mephibosheth bowed himself, and said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" I think that is a beautiful point. It pictures the real state of the soul that gets into the presence of God with a true estimate of what it is in His sight. Observe he calls himself "a dead dog." He humbles himself under the sense of his own actions, and the treatment he has given to David. I admit it was the treatment of indifference. Mephibosheth's had not been a course of open opposition like that of Saul. It had been cold distrust, and contemptuous indifference, and that is perhaps your position. It has not perhaps been open, blasphemous opposition to the Lord. What has it been? Cold, and, more or less, contemptuous indifference to Jesus. Mephibosheth had a deep sense of what his own behaviour had been, and judged it unsparingly.

"Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, thy master's son, *shall eat bread alway at my table;*" and then very strikingly is added, "Now Ziba had fifteen sons, and twenty servants"

(ver. 10). I confess, when reading this, I often wondered why the Spirit of God should record that Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants, and it was a long time before I saw the point. It is very simple, however. It just shows how grace delights to contribute to the blessing of its object, and nothing is too much to devote to it. Here was David saying to Ziba, You and all your family must serve Mephibosheth; he is the object of my grace. And that is what God does. He saves and blesses a man out and out. He brings him to know Himself, and puts everything at his disposal. Everything is to contribute to his blessing. God loves us, and delights to bless us, and will turn everything to our advantage. The fifteen sons and twenty servants simply tell us that there is no limit to God's lavish supply to those whom His grace has blessed.

"Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, *as one of the king's sons*" (ver. 11). He was to be a son, not a stranger. He goes into David's house as a son, and that is what the Gospel does for the sinner. It makes him a son. Hitherto the servant of sin, and the servant of Satan, the moment the Gospel meets and blesses him, he becomes a son of God. "Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). When the prodigal son had spent his all in the far country, the thought crossed his mind, "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of

thy hired servants." But observe that he did not say that. When the father saw him a great way off, he ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. He treated him like a son, not as a servant. Ah! my dear friend, if God meets you, and blesses you, He gives you the place of a son, and not that of a servant. When he came to the father, he found nothing but love—nothing but goodness. How touching the description : " But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And the son said, " Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; " but he says nothing about being made a hired servant.

What did the father say? " Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry " (Luke xv. 18-24). So is it here. " Mephibosheth shall eat at my table *as one of the king's* SONS," says David. And every man here may so be blessed. We are forgiven our sins the moment there is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and at that moment we become the children of God, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. " He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name " (John i. 11, 12).

But you might say to me, Can I receive Christ? You may ; and if you are wise, you will do so at once.

And what became of Mephibosheth? He "dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table: and was lame on both his feet" (ver. 13). He dwelt in the place of royal grace, and how did he fare there? Like a king's son. Had you seen him, he would have on the robe of a king's son. If you had gone to the table of David, whom would you have seen there at every meal? Mephibosheth! He was quite at home, quite at ease; grace had won his heart. He is the figure of the Christian who knows that he is a Christian, who, as a simple believer, knows the joy which the Lord gives him. He seizes by faith what love provides, and enjoys it. He dwelt in Jerusalem. Why? "For he did eat *continually* at the king's table." He, nevertheless, "was lame on both his feet." He was not altered in himself; his position was altered. And we, if we come to Christ, are we altered? No. We are ourselves still. We remain the same as before we received Jesus. We are not changed in ourselves, nor improved in our old nature, but we have a new life, with new joys, and a new object, Christ Himself.

If we receive Jesus, and eat at the Father's table, and take the place of being His sons, we have to learn to be faithful, and that lesson Mephibosheth teaches us, too, beautifully. David lost his throne soon after Mephibosheth was received, through the conspiracy of Absalom, and had to fly from Jerusalem, and he naturally expected that Mephibosheth would be true to him and accompany him. So in the same way the Lord Jesus counts upon the fealty of your heart and mine, my dear young fellow-Christian.

If you will turn over to 2 Sam. xvi. 1-4, you will see

this brought out. Mephibosheth does not appear, but up comes Ziba with "two asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine." The king asks him, "What meanest thou by these?" And Ziba said he had prepared these for the king's household. Where is Mephibosheth? asked David. Oh! said Ziba, "He abideth at Jerusalem; for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." That was a dreadful lie of Ziba's, but David was deceived, and he says, "Behold thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth." It is very easy to black-ball a Christian. It is very easy for one young man to tell lies on another, but the truth will all come out.

David's kingdom is restored to him in chapter xix., and he returns to Jerusalem. When he comes back, who is the first person to come out and meet him? Listen, it is very instructive to me: "And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace" (xix. 24). He was a mourner. His heart was as true as steel to David. Jerusalem had been given up to merriment, and making much of Absalom. The rebels were drinking wine, and making feasts; but Mephibosheth was true to the rejected king. Just so is it now. The world is going on in its carelessness, forgetful of Jesus, and hurrying to eternal judgment. What is the real Christian doing? Standing for Christ. Are you standing for Christ? Do you think

Edinburgh knows you as a man of God—as a down-right, backbone Christian—a man who stands for the Lord? That is the question. Mephibosheth was well known in Jerusalem as true to the rejected king.

He stood alone apparently, but he stood. He had “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. v. 11). His heart was with his master in rejection. His heart was true to his absent lord. Now the king asks him, “Why wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?” and he answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame, and he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king” (vers. 26, 27). He it was who got ready, and prepared the bread and fruit and wine, to meet the king; but Ziba, rogue that he was, seized the laden asses, and rode off to the king, and slandered his master. David was deceived, but you can’t deceive Christ. There is no deceiving Him. I have had many a thing said about me during these three and thirty years that I have been a Christian, but I don’t care what people say. They can’t deceive my Master. He knows the truth, and that is the great thing.

Rather taken aback by learning the true state of affairs, David says, “I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said, Yea, *let him take it all*, for as much as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own land” (vers. 29, 30). I don’t care about the land, says Mephibosheth. That was all Ziba cared for. He wanted the earth. Like the worldly Christian, he wants things on earth.

Mephibosheth says, I don't want the land, I wanted you. I wanted your presence, I wanted to be for you, and with you.

I call this a grand finish—a fine finish. Don't you? Here is a man true as steel—a downright, backbone disciple—a man whom you can't shunt. He won't yield. His heart is for his lord. He is for his lord, and he wants his lord only. I think Mephibosheth was a beautiful character. He had tasted grace, and afterwards was faithful. Do you think our Lord does not look for us to be true and faithful? If we are saying, I will follow Christ, and at the same time hugging the world—with one arm holding the world, and with the other trying to hold Christ—do you think that will do? No! That is a double-minded man, and “a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. i. 8). There are a good many people professing to be Christians, but they have too much of Christ to enjoy the world, and too much of the world to enjoy Christ, or to be able to do any real service for Him in the world. They are the people whom nobody respects; they are the people without a backbone. God save you from being a Christian of that stamp! I would like you to be a living, burning witness for Christ—the sort of person concerning whom it will be said, “Ah! if you get near to him, he will be sure to speak to you about Christ.” Seek a man who, to be like the apostle Paul, can say, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”

How beautifully does the curtain drop upon Mephibosheth! I do not care for the land, he says; I did not want the land; but I wanted your presence, O David! I don't think anything could be more grate-

ful or sweet to the heart of David. And so is it with the Lord Jesus. He looks for our affections and our faithfulness to Him ; and should that faithfulness lead to persecution and loss for His name, never mind, for He says to all who suffer for Him, " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life " (Rev. ii. 10).

A YOUNG MAN NAMED SAUL.

ACTS vii. 55-60, ix. 1-30.

Lecture IX.

WE have here the historical account of the conversion of this remarkable man. A more remarkable conversion, I suppose, there never was, because, at the moment when the grace of God met him, he was doing all he possibly could to blot out the name of the Lord Jesus Christ from the earth ; and that is the reason why he says, and says with truth : “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, OF WHOM I AM THE CHIEF ” (1 Tim. i. 15). Now, was he a scandalous sinner? No! Was he openly immoral? No! Was he a gross liver? No! Was he a man who set at defiance the laws of man and of God? No! And yet he says he was the chief of sinners. Now, it is very important to notice this, because Paul was in reality a most religious man ; but it was religion without Christ. Nay, more, it was religion opposed to Christ. Of course, he was a Jew. He had been born, bred, and brought up in the faith of the Jew as to the unity of Jehovah. Consequently he denied the divinity of Jesus, when He, as Son of God, appeared on earth.

The Jews regarded Jesus as a blasphemous impostor, claiming to be equal with God. Hence they rejected Him, crowned Him with thorns, and slew

Him ; but God raised Him from the dead. After He had been seen of witnesses for forty days, He ascended, going as Man into the glory of God. The Saviour being seated at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost came down, and the testimony to a glorified Christ was commenced on earth, and continued from the second chapter of Acts to the seventh, a little of which I read to you. There Stephen, a remarkable man, quiet, devoted, earnest, but a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, gives a magnificent witness to the nation of Israel as to Christ, winding up his address by the statement, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye." The guilt of the nation was complete. They had broken the law, persecuted the prophets, slain the forerunners of Jesus, betrayed and murdered Him, and now resisted the Holy Ghost. At this they gnashed on him with their teeth ; but Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." What a wonderful thing for a man on earth to say !

At this point his listeners stopped their ears, ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city to slay him. They stoned him, and the witnesses, who said he was blaspheming, took off their garments, the more to free their arms to cast these stones at Stephen. They did not want their garments kicked about, however, so they laid them down "at a young man's feet whose name was Saul." He did not rush into the crowd to fling stones, but he consented

to the deed. He said tacitly, "Let that man die, for he has said he has seen Jesus the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, which is an utter impossibility: I consent to his death." Stephen, stoned thus brutally, dies like his Master, praying for his murderers. His Master had said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; and the servant, in the moment of his death, prays, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He could not add, "for they know not what they do," for too much had come out about Christ at this time.

There follows on this a terrible persecution against the Church, and Saul not only consents to it, but from that moment becomes the active embodiment of Jewish hatred, and determination to blot out the name of Jesus. When telling the story of his conversion at a later date to Agrippa, he says, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9). This doubtless he did with all good conscience. But mark! conscience is no guide to a man. Conscience is like the helm of a ship, and if you have a correct chart, and a good steersman, the helm is useful in guiding the course of a ship; but if you leave the helm to be tossed about by wind and wave, the ship will go on the rocks. We hear now-a-days that if a man walks according to his conscience, all will be well for time and eternity. That doctrine is not divine, and will not do. Conscience, I repeat, is no guide. Here Saul was "in all good conscience" doing everything he could against the name of Jesus. He becomes the missionary of the hatred of the Jews against the name of Jesus; and not content with

ravaging the assembly in Jerusalem, he must needs go to foreign cities.

In the ninth of Acts we find him setting out for Damascus, where he learns there are a few Christians—a few believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—a few who love the heavenly Saviour. This young man, full of Jewish fire and zeal, is seen “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” Ere starting on his strange missionary enterprise he goes to the high priest and asks credentials. He “desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring bound unto Jerusalem” (ver. 2). What a task! What a business! To bring men and women, who loved Jesus, bound to Jerusalem, and compel them to blaspheme His holy name or die (Acts xxvi. 9-11).

I wonder if some hater of Jesus, legally authorised to bind and deliver to prison all that love Jesus in Edinburgh, were to appear here this night, what would you and I say? Would you confess or deny Him? Would you say, I do love that blessed Saviour, I really love His name. If not yet on the Lord’s side, I pray you, as this year dies away to-night, let your heart be Christ’s henceforth. I do not say you are pursuing the same mad course that the zealot Paul was pursuing here. You see what he did. He took a missionary tour to bring people to prison and death who loved the name of the Lord Jesus, and that is why he speaks of himself as “the chief of sinners” (1 Tim. i. 15). He knew that he was persecuting Christ in the persons of His people. This made him “the chief of sinners,” but it was this same act that

made him the chief of legalists, for, in another part of his writings, he says, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more : . . . as touching the law, a Pharisee ; concerning zeal, persecuting the church ; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. ii. 4-6). Paul touches, if I may so say, the two poles of human experience. He reaches the top of the tree of human righteousness, and goes to the lowest depth of human guilt by the same act—persecuting the saints. What was the summit of the tree of human righteousness? As a Jew, thinking he was doing God service by slaying those who loved Jesus. As to legal human righteousness, the finishing touch was the persecuting of the Church. How was he the chief of sinners? Because persecuting the Church! Look, he has got to the top and to the bottom of the ladder of human righteousness. Hence he can say to the legalist, I have gone further than you, but I have given up all and taken my place as lost, and Jesus has saved me. To the man who is writhing under a sense of his sin and guilt Paul says, I am a greater sinner than you are, and yet Christ saved me.

Now let us see the remarkable way in which the Lord meets him. It is a most charming history. He goes on his way to Damascus, and all of a sudden, as he nears the town, he is challenged. "Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven" (ver. 3), "above the brightness of the sun" (xxvi. 13). What was that light? It was the light that shone from the face of the Son of Man in glory. Wonderful light, indeed, was it; brighter than the sun at noonday. Think of that! You know what the sun is at noon-

day, and in an Eastern climate too. It was at noonday when the sun was shining in all its meridian splendour that the light of the sun was put out by a brighter light. Well might Paul say, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). It was the glory of God in the face of Jesus shining on him; and what was the effect? That wonderful light blinded him for the time being, and "he fell to the earth." The Lord had met him. The history of his self-will, of his sin, and of his wickedness, under the garb of religion, was over.

What grace, that Christ should pick up this man, who had been His most bitter opponent on earth, and make him a vessel of grace to others. What a marvellous thing also is it that the grace of Christ should take up a man like you or me, who has been bitterly opposed to Him, and turn us, from being the servants of sin and the devil, to be His servants. That grace met Paul. It has met me; may it meet you to-night. If you are unsaved, unconverted, may the grace that saved Saul, and saved me, save you now!

Overwhelmed by the light, "he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (ver. 4.) What a moment in his history! when he hears that all-commanding voice—a voice absolutely human, but intensely divine—the voice of a man, but which he felt was the voice of God—the voice of a human being speaking to him in his mother-tongue (Hebrew) from glory. Nevertheless, it was the voice of the eternal God to that man's soul and conscience. He who spoke was Jesus. The

exalted man was God's eternal Son, who had veiled His essential glory,—His Godhead glory,—in human form. He now speaks from heaven to Paul and to us, and it is of vital importance not to despise His sayings. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. xii. 25).

Whence did Jesus speak to Saul? From heaven! and, young man, on the road to hell, a voice from heaven speaks to you, and I ask you, Have you heard and obeyed that voice? "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" No doubt Saul was amazed. How could he be persecuting Jesus? It was a wonderful question. Could you persecute Jesus? I believe you could. Perhaps you have done so. If your history were published, it might come out that you had been persecuting Jesus. Did you not laugh at that man who works in the same building with you, for his being converted? Have you not jeered at your own brother who was converted, and was seeking to serve the Lord? Have you not ridiculed the sister who sought to speak for Jesus, and to live for Him? Why persecutest thou Me? says Christ. In that moment Saul learned that the saint upon earth and the Saviour in glory were really one. He, the head of the body, in heavenly glory; and they, the members of it, here on earth. He learned the identity of the people of Christ on earth with the blessed Saviour in heaven. What a revulsion took place! The time of his self-will is for ever over, the man is humbled in the dust; and not only does he fall down in the dust materially, but he gets down morally, by the side of Job, in dust and

ashes. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6). Yes, that man is down in dust and ashes before God. He has seen Christ. He has seen the heavenly Saviour. Have you seen Him? Has your eye ever seen Him? Oh! if never before, let the eye of faith turn to the Saviour in glory this night.

Saul turns at once to the Lord. He is humbled, broken right down in the dust. Now observe his changed attitude. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord?" He does not say, Who art thou? He says, "Who art thou, Lord?" He knows Him. That voice had done its work. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). He heard that voice, and lived. He was a quickened soul from that moment. He had the sense that he was in the presence of One who knew all about him. Were you ever brought into the presence of the Lord really, and got an answer as he got it? "And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Has He to say to you to-night, "I am Jesus whom *thou* persecutest"? If you have never loved Him, followed Him, or got to know Him, or serve Him, His voice speaks to you from glory to-night, and He says, Do you want to know Me, and to do My will? Then, as He reveals Himself as Jesus to your soul, you will understand the wonderful revulsion of feeling that passed over that stricken man's soul, as he learned that the One who had arrested him, the One whose light blinded him, was the Jesus whom he had been persecuting.

He had looked upon Jesus as an impostor, and thought that he was doing God service in getting His name wiped off the earth. And while he was busily bent on his murderous tour, he was arrested by God's glory shining from the face of that same Jesus. I say again, What a revulsion of feeling took place in his soul. He saw in a moment what he had been doing during the whole of his life. He saw the criminality of his conduct, the fulness of his sin, the terribleness of his guilt, and I have no doubt he felt what would be the consequences of his folly and sin. Have you not sinned precisely in the same way? I believe we all have. We all have been opposed to Christ more or less, though our opposition may not have taken the fiery demonstration of a Saul.

There will be a mighty revulsion of feeling when you are truly converted. I don't believe in the conversion that does not change a man, and if you really turn to the Lord there will be a downright change in your life. If there is not, you may seriously doubt whether you have been converted or not. Was not Paul changed? Look at him! "And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (ver. 6). He is at once obedient. You have immediately dependence and obedience, the characteristic features of the new life that was started in his soul. Quickened by the life-giving voice of the Son of God, risen from the dead, the existence of that new life in his soul was demonstrated by the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" I have done my own will till now, but from this time forth I am Thine.

The Lord Christ says, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet ; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles," who did not care for the gospel, "unto whom I now send thee." And what was he to do? "To open their eyes," he got his mission, "and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 16-18). Prostrate on the ground and blinded, he asks, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Go to the Gentiles, says Jesus, and "open their eyes."

That is what a man wants first of all. Have your eyes been opened to the fact that you are a man on the road to an eternal hell? It is a great thing when a man gets his eyes opened. He sees his danger. Are your eyes opened to see your need of Christ, and to see your danger? May God open them to-night, and turn you from the power of Satan to God! What is the state of the man who is not converted? His eyes are shut, and he is under the power of Satan.

I do not wonder at a gentleman's gardener being a little upset when he came back from doing what his master had bidden him. His master's favourite dog had a litter of whelps. Pups, as you know, are born blind, but usually open their eyes about the ninth day. The ninth day passed, and the fifteenth, and twentieth, but never a pup opened an eye. The master at length said to his man, "They are no use, they are all blind ; drown the whole lot of them." The gardener

obeyed his master, and casting them into a pond, drowned the whelps. After a few minutes his master met him, looking awfully upset. "Did you do what I told you?" he asked. "I did, sir," replied the man, "but I did not like the job." "But they were all blind, and no use." "Yes," said the man, "but every one of them opened their eyes just as they went down." Little good it will do you, my friend, to open your eyes just as you pass into eternity; and it is just when you go into hell unconverted that your eyes will be opened, depend upon it. The eyes are opened too late when there. May God show you now your ruin, and your need, and the danger in which you are! In one of his epistles, Paul says: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv 3, 4).

Paul knew full well the terrible power that had blinded him, till this heavenly light illuminated him, and he got his mission, to go to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light"—thank God for that!—"and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Hearing these words, he rises and goes forth with a mission to carry the most lovely news that ever mortal man could bear. What news? That there is a Saviour in glory, who has power and grace to save the worst man in the world; that there is a Saviour in glory for the most godless young man in this hall. If you turn to Him, and have

faith in Him, I will tell you what you get,—“the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith.” And who are they? They are called saints frequently in the New Testament. There are two classes in this hall—in this world—to-night—the saints and the sinners. And who are the saints? Those who are in heaven, you reply. Thank God, there are some there, but there are many still on earth, and I would like to see you among them.

Up to this point Saul had been persecuting them. “How much evil he hath done to thy saints,” says Ananias to the Lord about him. But who are the saints? Those who belong to Jesus! You would not perhaps like to be called, or to take the ground of being, a saint. I will tell you why. If you call yourself a saint, those round about you will look to see whether your walk and conversation is like that of a saint, *i.e.* saintly, suited to God. Quite right. I think it is perfectly fair. Observe! I am either a sinner on my road to eternal judgment, or a saint on my way to glory. Every man in this hall to-night is either a hell-bound sinner, or a glory-bound saint. Which are you? That is a terribly sharp line to draw, you say. Yes, I admit it, but so long as it defines the road you are on, it suffices. I say again, every young man in this audience is either a hell-bound sinner, in his sins, or a glory-bound saint through faith in the blood of Christ. Which are you? I am not hell-bound; through grace I am heaven-bound. Go with me to glory! I won’t go with you to hell. Come with me to Christ: I won’t go with you to judgment. It is far better to heed the message this man got, as he rose up out of the dust, than to disregard it.

I don't think Saul was in the full liberty of the Gospel at that moment. That came three days after. Observe now—"The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man." "They heard not the voice of him that spake to me," Paul says (Acts xxii. 9). When Christ meets a man, in saving grace, he speaks directly to him. I was preaching the Gospel in a hall in this city not long ago, and at the close of the meeting a poor troubled woman came to me and said, "Somebody has been telling you all my history during the past week." "No," I replied, "I had no information about you from anybody." "But it must be," she said; "you have been telling me my life, and the history of my sins during the past week." "I knew nothing, but God knew all, and He has sent a message of mercy and pardon to you," was all I could reply. It is a great thing when a man hears the voice of the Son of God. Have you heard it? Saul heard it, and, thank God! I have heard it.

The Lord then said to him, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. . . . And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened he saw no man." Man is out of sight. But "they led him by the hand, and brought him unto Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (vers. 8, 9). Fancy, he was in such deep exercise that he could neither eat, drink, nor, I should suppose, sleep for three days and three nights. I would be deeply thankful if I heard you were so anxious about your soul. There is no sleep in hell. There is no food in hell, and there is no drink in hell, and there is no

getting out of it. The men who go into it will never get out, "and they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. xiv. 11). That is a solemn word, and an awful outlook for eternity surely. Three days and three nights without sleep is a terrible thing, but what will an eternity of that nature be? Unsaved young man, you are journeying into it.

Think not lightly of this abstinence in Paul's case. He was in the deepest exercise, as he reviewed the past, his awful opposition to Christ, his torture of His people, his utter blindness under Satan's power. He passed through deep exercise of mind, heart, and conscience, and profound tumult of soul. That is what it was. I don't think that a man, when he is first converted, gets into the joy of the Gospel immediately. The deeper the exercise of conscience the more lasting and real will the work be in the soul, and the more steady and firm will the walk be. But see the way the Lord meets him. There was in Damascus a man named Ananias. The Lord has always got servants to do His work, blessed be His name! Ananias was free to serve the Lord. What a happy thing it is to be a servant of the Lord. "And to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord" (ver. 10). He was ready to do anything the Lord wanted. What a blessed thing to be permitted to serve the Lord. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go unto the street which is called Straight." Ah, He knew the street where Saul lived, and He knows the street where you live. "Go unto the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth" (ver.

11). These days and nights he had spent in prayer, looking to God for mercy, for grace, for deliverance, for salvation. Light, I believe, he had ; but he had not got salvation, in the full sense of the word. He was not fully delivered, and he spent his time praying.

And don't you think God delights to answer such prayer? It is His joy to do so. If this is like your case, go on praying, the answer will come some day, as it came to the telegraph-clerk. He was very anxious about his soul, but got no peace, comfort, or rest, although one Sunday he heard three preachers. He went home to his lodgings very anxious. How could he be saved? He knew his sins were unforgiven, and he got little sleep. Monday morning he went to his work in a telegraph box on a railway line. Shortly after he arrived there came the signal that told him his station was called. As the message was received, he wrote down the name of the sender and the addressee. Then came the message—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He dropped his pencil, and looked at the telegram. Though designed for an anxious servant girl, who also got peace through its words, it was God's message to him. He said afterwards—"That 'LAMB OF GOD,' that 'REDEMPTION,' that 'BLOOD,' those 'RICHES OF HIS GRACE' went right into my poor heart, and no one in the whole world could have had greater joy than I had that Monday morning."

Ananias hesitates to go, for he could scarcely credit

that a man like Saul, who had been a persecutor, could be anxious. But ere he arrives, he is seen by Saul, in a heavenly vision, to be on the road. He "hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he may receive his sight" (ver. 12). Beautiful grace of Christ! He prepares Saul for what would take place, thus confirming his faith. "And Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name" (vers. 13, 14). Is it not lovely to note the freedom of intimacy, and the way the servant can speak to his Lord and Master? There is perfect freedom of intercourse between the Master and the servant, and the Lord, in no way offended, says: "Go thy way; for he is A CHOSEN VESSEL unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house" (vers. 15, 16). Of course, Saul is ready for him, for, in a vision, he has seen Ananias coming; and I have no doubt as Ananias asked for Saul, and was shown into the room where he was, Saul would say, I was waiting for him. Ananias lays his hand upon him, saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (ver. 17). What a thrill of joy would pass through that man's soul as Ananias called him "Brother Saul"! Could you be truthfully called "Brother"? Further, would you glory in being a

brother? I glory in that beautiful name. It is the name of the family of God.

I will tell you what took place in my own history. I was converted in London on Lord's Day the 16th December 1860, and I went the next Saturday into Somersetshire, and on Sunday came across a little company of believers. They had heard of my conversion, and they also knew what a thoroughly worldly man I had been before that. Well, they were going to take the Lord's Supper together, and they asked me if I would like to break bread with them. "What," said I, "I break bread? I have only been converted a week. It is far too serious a matter for me to think of sitting down at the Lord's Table." So I refused my privilege at the time, but I could not tell you the joy that filled my soul—like Saul's when he heard himself called "Brother Saul"—when I learned that these dear children of God would take me into their company.

There is nothing more blessed than to be numbered among the people of God. Oh, what joy if only I were assured that I could address you as "Brother." Deep must have been Saul's joy to hear Ananias say, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." What happened to Saul was very remarkable. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized" (ver. 18). He confessed Christ. He publicly, openly, and honestly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He says elsewhere, "O king Agrippa, I was not dis-

obedient unto the heavenly vision " (Acts xxvi. 19). And we read here, " And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues that he is the Son of God " (ver. 20). He went and told others of Jesus. If you have been converted to God, your joy and privilege is to tell others of the blessed Saviour who has saved you.

And now, if you have never yielded your heart to the Lord, as I this evening close this series of addresses to you dear young fellows, I pray you turn to the Lord now. I charge you by the love of God, by the reality of the sufferings of Christ, those sufferings which He endured to redeem you,—I charge you by the joys of heaven, and the sorrows of hell,—by the blessedness of heaven's rest, and by the solemnity of coming judgment,—by the light that shines from the face of a glorified Saviour, and by the blackness and darkness that await the impenitent soul,—I charge you by all these to yield your heart to the Lord to-night, if you have never done it before. Could you possibly have a better time, a better moment, for doing so than this, when the old year—spent in the service of sin and of Satan—is just passing away? Let not 1893 rise in the judgment-day as a witness against you. I implore you, make up your minds, decide for glory this night, receive the Saviour now, believe on Him now, and go hence upon the Lord's side, a witness to His grace and looking for His coming. You may never, no, never, get another opportunity to decide for Christ. Let it be to-night; and to-morrow rise, and begin a new year, a new life, a new history! Serve the Lord, and the Lord only. Oh, how blessed it is to be on the Lord's side!

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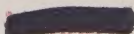
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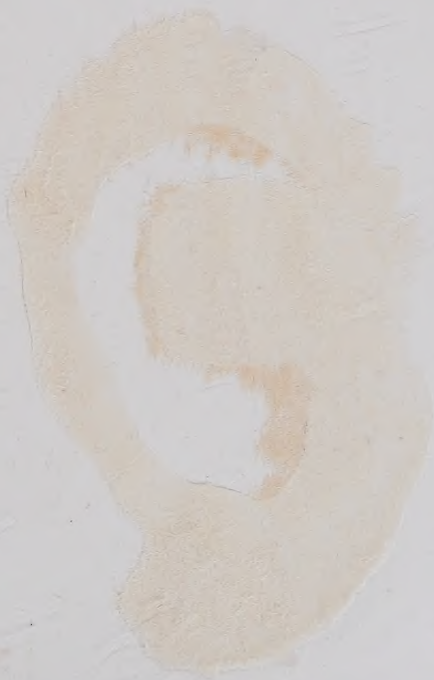
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